

**NARRATIVES OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF ACADEMIC IDENTITIES WITHIN THE LESOTHO
HIGHER EDUCATION MILIEU**

by

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ABSTRACT

Extant literature on academic identities claims that academic identities not only represent academics' subjectively construed understandings of who they are but they also derive from roles, statuses, membership in disciplinary communities and characteristics that make academics unique individuals. Even so, research focusing exclusively on academic identities is unprecedented in the Lesotho higher education (HE) sector; therefore, this study describes how narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at the National University of Lesotho (NUL). How do reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff? How do descriptions of the (mis)alignment between job facets, individual values and expectations influence the meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics' professional self-concepts? How do stories of internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influence academic identity trajectories?

Being interpretive in nature, this study used narrative interviews to collect data from a sample of thirty-one academics from NUL. The findings revealed that 'who' an academic is derives from meanings of 'lived experiences' of work enjoyment, applicability, exploitation, facilitation, multitasking, prestige and burnout. The findings also showed that academic identities were negotiated by reflexively interpreting the cultural expectation of 'finishing work on time' through work behaviours such as managing time, working overtime, self-motivation, underperforming, balancing roles and seeking work assistance. The participants' narratives also revealed that the fulfilment for academics' professional self-concepts derived from autonomy, accomplishments, learning, interdependencies, work environment, students' attitudes and recognition. Lastly, the study showed that participants' academic identity trajectories were influenced by altruism, passion, options, disillusion and relations.

Overall, the 'narratives of experience' reiterated that academic identities at NUL were contextualised constructs of 'work experiences', 'membership in communities', 'job attitudes' and 'self-discovery,' based on the self as a unique individual, a group member and a role holder. Consistent with the interactionist perspective, academic identities at NUL represent structurally, culturally and institutionally located stories of experiences and meanings derived from the work situation, the setting and social relationships that academics participate in daily at NUL.

Key terms: *narratives, academic identities, Lesotho, qualitative research, academics, symbolic interactionism, identity theory, situation identity theory, higher educational institutions.*

DECLARATION

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I declare that “Narratives of the Construction of Academic Identities within the Lesotho Higher Education Milieu” is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

Date

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my mother Mrs. 'Malipalesa Louisa Mathe. Kea leboha letebele. I love you and I would be nothing without you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| AC | Affective Commitment |
| CoP | Communities of Practice |
| CC | Continuance Commitment |
| CHE | Council on Higher Education |
| GoL | Government of Lesotho |
| HE | Higher Education |
| HEIs | Higher Educational Institutions |
| IT | Identity Theory |
| MoET | Ministry of Education and Training |
| NC | Normative Commitment |
| NUL | National University of Lesotho |
| OC | Organisational Commitment |
| OI | Organisational Identification |
| SIT | Situated Identity Theory |
| UNISA | University of South Africa |

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CHAPTER ONE

PERSPECTIVES ON ACADEMIC IDENTITIES AT NUL

1.1 Background to the study

A growing body of the literature focusing on identities and experiences of academics in HE suggests that universities are complex and distinct organisations where different constructions of 'academic' coexist (Fitzmaurice, 2013:613). Consequently "there are multiple, expanding and conflicting ideas about what it is to be an academic" (Pick, Symons & Teo, 2015:3). Even so, academic identity has been defined as the extent to which academics describe themselves primarily in terms of the university, profession and personal interpretations of what an academic should be like (King & Billot, 2016:158; Winter, 2009:122). Thus academic identities are representations of the goals, values, priorities, and ways of being in the world for academics (Kram, Wasserman & Yip, 2012:306). Accordingly, they are not fixed or stable; instead, they are informed by attitudes, knowledge and other life domains from which academics draw their experiences (James, 2006:7).

Academic identities also derive from the different discipline-based communities within the university (Vandeyar, 2010:916), which have their own culture, histories, traditions, myths, values and practices. Thus academics are guided by the norms of the community and institution that they inhabit for it is here where those who share a passion or concern for something interact regularly and learn how to do their craft better (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1). Discipline-based communities house assumptions about what is to be learned, task performance, patterns of publication, professional interaction as well as social and political status (Clarke, Hyde & Drennan. 2013:7). Accordingly, academic identities are "reinforced in and by strong stable communities and the social processes generated within them" (Henkel, 2005:157).

These various perspectives of academic identities highlight two issues; firstly, academic identities are both individual and social. Secondly, they are situated and play an integral role in the well-being and productivity of academic staff (Clarke et al. 2013:9; Lieff, Baker, Mori, Egan-Lee, Chin & Reeves, 2012:208). It is for this reason that Kreiner, Hollensbe and Sheep (2006:1333) talk of academics as one of two parties involved in the interaction of co-creating identity. Thus, academic identities are naught but reflections of the interaction between the university and the individual academic as a member of a profession (Winter, 2009:122; Kreiner et al. 2006:1333), as he or she seeks to address the question 'who am I?' (Brown, 2014:23).

Nevertheless, today academics have to deal with the constantly shifting, evolving and changing HE field; thus the meanings associated with what 'being' an academic entails are also in a process of change (Archer, 2008:385). Research on academic identities also suggests that ongoing changes within the HE sector have put immense pressure on how academics see themselves, as evidenced by studies in Europe (Whitchurch, 2012; Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013), North America (Rhoades, 2007), South Africa (Leibowitz, Ndebele & Winberg, 2014), South America (Guzmán-Valenzuela & Barnett, 2013), Australia (Churchman & King, 2009) and New Zealand (Billot, 2010). Accordingly, it is becoming more and more necessary to understand not only what constitutes an academic today (Billot, 2010:709) but also how academics understand themselves and interpret their experiences (Lieff et al. 2012:208). Moreover, a longstanding and traditional view of academics as tribe members socialised into the values, norms, practices of their disciplinary cultures has been challenged by new (and often conflicting) expectations brought forth by the transformation of academic systems as the sources for strong and stable academic identities (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013:1136).

Further, changes in the HE milieu have increasingly constricted the role and status of academic staff; while HEIs have changed in response to external influences, their strategic directions have not always developed in alignment with academics' notions of their professional selves. Thus academics are now more like managed professionals, whose work is categorised by the steering and monitoring of the institutional management (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013:1136). Secondly, the so-called 'third space professionals' or the highly qualified specialist staff in HE like teaching and learning professionals and research managers (Whitchurch, 2013:49), increasingly have a say in the core academic tasks and duties, which have enhanced their standing relative to academics in university hierarchies (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013:1136). Therefore it follows that the construction of academic identities is social, reflexive and involves judging and making decisions, based on a network of personal concerns, values and aspirations (Vandeyar, 2010:917).

Consequently, this study focuses on academic staff at NUL, as the oldest, leading and largest university in Lesotho, with the aim of identifying the individual experiences of 'being' an academic there. This type of empirical research is important in the context of the Lesotho HE sector, given the statements that little research has focused on how academics come to possess the constructs and ideas that inform their academic and professional identities (Clarke et al. 2013:7) and/or on the nature and complexity of the factors related to the formation and growth of their academic identities (Lieff et al. 2012:208). Another important element of this study is that it views academic identity as a social construct; thus how NUL academics perceive themselves in relations to others (colleagues, students and management) alters their self-views and behaviour in response to their interaction and the social structures that they represent (King & Billot, 2016:158).

1.2 Problem statement

Academic identity as an interplay between the individual, the institution and the disciplinary community (Henkel, 2011:65), not only plays an integral role in the well-being and productivity of academic staff, but it also positively influences their need to teach, improve their skills, acquire satisfaction from teaching and, ultimately, from student learning (Lieff et al., 2012:208). Academic identities also represent academics' subjectively construed understandings of who they are, were in the past or desire to be in the future. As such, they are key in understanding and explaining almost everything that happens in and around HEIs (Brown, 2014:20). Therefore, HEIs management and policy makers' failure to acknowledge the importance of academic identity puts academics (as the primary sources of motivation, commitment and productivity) at risk (McInnis, 2010; Kirk & Wall, 2011).

Traditionally, research on academic identity has focused on 'academics as professionals'; that is on their level of education, job titles or whether they think of themselves as academics, professionals, administrators, managers, researchers, teachers or practitioners (Feather, 2010:192). Other research efforts have been directed at explaining the different roles that academics undertake at work and how they influence their academic identities (cf. Barnett & Di Napoli, 2008; Churchman, 2006; Becher & Trowler, 2001). However, recently there has been a growing realisation that the construction of academic identities is no longer straightforward (Vandeyar, 2010:915) due to the constantly shifting HE field and its influence on the meanings associated with what 'being' an academic entails (Archer, 2008:385).

Consequently, an increased focus on identity in the academic domain has been directed to understanding how academics perceive their identity, handle pressure from the context, respond to an ever changing environment and revise their professional roles (Billot & King, 2015; Archer, 2008; Clegg, 2008; Churchman, 2006; Henkel, 2000). To illustrate this, Ylijoki and Ursin (2013:1136) state that changes in HE increasingly constrict the role and status of academic staff such that they are more like managed professionals instead of being self-regulated and autonomous. On-going changes within HEIs also put pressure on how academics perceive themselves and their work; thus they are caught between maintaining 'fragmented' academic identities split into an increasing number of variegated, simultaneous and shifting notions of the self, whilst seeking to preserve 'coherence' by maintaining a sense of unique self-expression and wholeness across a set of identities over time (Pick et al., 2015:1-2). Thus Kirk and Wall (2011:77) contend that studies on identity have not fully and consistently centred on the importance of descriptions of work or the place of work in the context of identity-formation and practice. Similar sentiments are shared by Clarke et al. (2013:7) who state that limited research has focused on how academics come to possess the constructs and ideas that inform their academic identities.

Research has also provided a limited insight into the nature and complexity of factors related to the formation and growth of academic identities. Thus, more research focusing on meanings attached to experiences of work and its setting is needed. More also needs to be known about how academics understand themselves, interpret experiences and draw meaning from them, as well as how they present themselves and wish to be perceived and recognised by others in the academic and professional communities (Lieff et al., 2012:208). Brew, Boud, Crawford and Lucas (2017:3) also opine that “more needs to be understood about the academy as sites of social practice where there is interplay between the institution, the working lives of academics, what they do, what they think and about disciplines as networks”.

Since multiple and conflicting ideas exist about what it is to be an academic (Pick et al., 2015:1), this study will ‘unmute’ the silenced voices of NUL academic staff in order to capture the personal experiences of constructing academic identities reflective of one’s sense, purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness (Billot, 2010:713).

1.2.1 Research questions

“Being an academic can be like working in a hall of mirrors; as academics reflect on their work and who they are, they find many different images looking back at them” (Pick et al. 2015:1). Accordingly, the meanings associated with what ‘being’ an academic entails are always shifting and changing (Vandeyar, 2010; Archer, 2008). As roles and responsibilities of academic staff are reframed and revised, it is not only becoming more and more necessary to understand what makes an academic today, but also how they perceive their academic identities (Billot, 2010:709). Since academics do not just ‘store’ their work experiences but rather ‘story’ them (Badley, 2016:377), their identities are constructed from the set of meanings that define them in terms of their roles, statuses, membership in disciplinary communities and the characteristics that make them unique individuals (Musolf, 2003:8). Therefore, the principal research question of this study is: **How do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL?** The subsidiary questions of the study are:

- How do reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff?
- How do descriptions of the (mis)alignment between work roles, expectations and individual values influence meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics’ professional self-concepts?

- How do internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influence academic identity trajectories?

1.2.2 Objectives of the study

Central to this study is the premise that academic identities are ‘hybrids’; hence academics engage in identity work to create, present, and sustain identities that are: (1) reflective of both their HEI and personal uniqueness (Winter, 2009; Henkel, 2000); (2) shaped by the institution, discipline and personal interpretations of what an academic should be like (King & Billot, 2016); (3) constructed within academics’ everyday realities (Clarke et al., 2013); and (4) reflective of the life history and individual commitments of an academic (Vandeyar, 2010). Thus, this study will examine in-depth how individual work experiences and disciplinary community membership influence academic identity meanings, keeping in mind that the disciplinary community provides academics with values, modes of working and self-esteem, hence their academic identities flourish there. Therefore the purpose of this study is to: **Describe the narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic and their influence on the construction of academic identities at NUL.** The specific research objectives are to:

- Examine reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to membership in disciplinary communities and their influence on the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff.
- Analyse how the (mis)alignment between job facets, individual values and expectations influence meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics’ professional self-concepts.
- Describe stories of internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL and their influence academic identity trajectories.

1.3 Rationale for the study

For most of us, work occupies the largest share of our lives; even when it is relatively unpleasant, it tends to be a structuring element in our lives. Work not only provides social contacts and opportunities to participate in shared activities with others, but it offers a salary which helps people cope with day-to-day life, and provides a basis for the acquisition and exercise of skills and capacities. Further, work provides access to environments that contrast with domestic surroundings and a temporal structure that provides a sense of direction in daily activities. Most importantly, and related to this study, is the idea that work provides people with an identity; that is, work is valued for the sense of stable social identity that it offers (Giddens, 2006:777).

In *Men and their Work*, the interactionist researcher, Everett Cherrington Hughes (1958) approaches work as a cultural experience and a social trajectory, disrupted by many different turning points. For him, work changes in time and space; thus work experiences represent socially, culturally and organisationally defined time and space. Since work and the experience of work are always in a state of change, Hughes (1958) contends that workers' identities must also be constantly changing. Thus, identity construction is both socially and individually contingent on the social world that people live in or the subtleties of a specific field (Paquette, 2012:5).

Similar to Hughes (1958), my interest in studying academic staff identities arose from the realisation that NUL academics hold emotionally charged and subjective responses to their work. Chiefly, I wanted to find out how they feel about their work and how they understand their 'place' within NUL, the Lesotho HE sector and the society at large. This interest was sparked by comments that I often heard from them (as my colleagues) when they discussed various aspects of their job. I would hear comments such as "if I found another job, I would resign from this one", "I hate this job" and "please help me find another job."

All these comments puzzled me, and I asked myself: "Why would people whose jobs are critical in the socio-economic development of Lesotho say this and what does this mean in terms of quality of the HE sector in Lesotho? Why are they still working here if they are so unhappy? How do they perceive and experience their work? How does working at NUL contribute to how they view and feel about themselves as academics and professionals?" These questions then brought forth the realisation that not enough was known about how academics feel about themselves and their work, despite the fact that they have the monumental task of training the next generation of professionals. It dawned on me that I needed to find out why they chose academic careers in the first place, whether they identify 'with' the academic profession itself or whether they are just 'in' academic occupations.

The second concern that led to my interest in studying academic identities was the politicisation of academic staff grievances in Lesotho. Anywhere one would go, especially after the prolonged 2012 strike action by university teaching staff in Lesotho, one would hear people arguing that lecturers were striking because they wanted to topple the government. This was exacerbated by the fact that the academic strikes were concurrent with the preparations for the 2012 General Elections in Lesotho. Numerous rival political campaigns then based themselves on the lecturer strikes as signs of the failure of the government. Thus the issue was politicised although essentially it was a dispute between the NUL management and its academic staff. These issues then made me realise that it was important to find out how work experiences shaped self-perceptions, work behaviour, professional self-concepts and the intention to quit. Thus, how NUL academics feel about their work and its setting is expected to play a vital role in shedding light on a subject about which very little is known in Lesotho.

1.3.1 Research gaps

Clarke et al. (2013:9) argue that the identity of 'academics as individuals' is an area that has not been researched in any great depth in HE, even though existent research provides interesting insights into this area. Even so, although notions of self and identity have been popular in the social sciences since the 1950s, it was only in the last thirty years that their movement to the centre of intellectual debates was witnessed (Brown, 2014:22). Today, identity in particular, is a significant component in contemporary sociological theorising (Cerulo, 1997:385); its rise is facilitated by an ever increasing interest in the practices and strategies used in its formation, especially in the agency that actors exercise in constructing their identities (Brown, 2014:23; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010:135).

Although social research focusing exclusively on academic identities is unprecedented in the Lesotho HE sector generally and NUL specifically, other disciplines have carried out related research. For example, Moloantoa (2015) investigated the factors affecting job satisfaction of academic employees at NUL; the findings revealed that salaries positively influenced job satisfaction while benefits, allowances, lack of equipment as well as poor institutional management contributed to job dissatisfaction. Pitikoe and Preece (2016) also investigated 'herder identity' among herd-boys in Lesotho and its implications for non-formal education. The findings revealed that herd-boys had two distinct identities, public identities (which were reflected through themes of culture and included notions of masculinity and negative experiences of being 'othered') and private identities (which reflected a more positive inner sense of self and freedom to be who one is through social capital support and significant others).

The sociological relevance of this study is reflected by the in-depth examination of the work-life concerns and a variety of work practices which academics at NUL engage in and how they influence their individual self-concepts and work behaviour. This study is expected to contribute to the literature on occupational communities, especially that which concerns the relationship between occupational membership and individual behaviour. Further, this study is intended to close the empirical gap in the sociology of professions (as a subfield of industrial sociology) by analysing the academic profession as a distinct form of work activity.

Specifically, it focuses on the relationships which direct it, as well as the NUL work environment itself, thereby illustrating the development of academic identities as an interplay between the individual, the institution and social groups within the NUL disciplinary communities (Henkel, 2011:65). This study also describes the individual and shared experiences of 'being' an academic within the Lesotho HE milieu, thus providing some answers to the key questions concerning this issue. It is expected to contribute to identity work within the sociology of professions by examining the part played by past and present work

experiences within HE social structures in the construction of academic identities. This study also describes the meanings attached to the 'lived' experiences of being an academic and constructing an academic identity, thus interpreting the meanings that academics as a group attribute to the 'contexts' of their work lives. Additionally, this research focuses on what it means to be an academic by showing that academics are complete beings with experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values. This reduction of individual experiences of work to a universal description of the 'very nature' of academic work does not only illuminate the essence of academic work but what being an academic feels like. Accordingly, studying academics through this study shows that their identities are key to understanding not only 'who' academics are, but also almost everything that happens in and around HEIs (Brown, 2014:20). As such, this research is important and timely because it pays attention to academic identity as the narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic at NUL (structure) versus individual's beliefs and values (agency) and as determinants of work behaviour, job attitudes and loyalty to NUL.

1.3.2 Theoretical value

Since academic identities are constructed by both academics and their different disciplines, research, teaching or professions (Leibowitz et al., 2014:1260), the literature shows that their identities may be viewed as social constructions arising from the processes of interaction between themselves and the university (Pick et al., 2015). Consequently, the construction of academic identities "includes dimensions of mutual engagement and shared repertoires" (Leibowitz et al., 2014:1259). Therefore academic identities have been (re)shaped to 'hybrids' of internal (private) and profession-based identities combined with external (public) and university structures (Pick et al., 2015).

The research questions for this study imply that academic identities have been studied without focusing on the reflexive understanding of what and/or how being an academic feels like. The aim of this study, however, is not to give definitions of a 'good' or 'bad' academic identity, but to search for deeper sociological explanations into the way in which academics view, understand, act and present themselves as employees and professionals. Therefore, this study is significant since it theorises on how academics use shared 'significant symbols' (words or learned signs) in social interaction to pass or convey shared meanings from real situations (Ferrante, 2015). This study also recognises both individual agency and broader structural aspects in the construction of academic identities; thus it shows that academic identity is both distinctively individual and discipline-based (Jawitz, 2009:242). This study proposes theoretical insights on how the links between different social orders (networks of social relationships) and the social world (patterns of interaction) influence the construction of identities and 'the extent to which identities are chosen or ascribed, stable or dynamic, coherent or fragmented, and motivated by desires for positive meaning and authenticity' (Brown, 2014:23).

1.3.3 Practical value

HE is a well-researched area in Southern Africa (Du Plooy, 2017; Nomdo, 2017; Eloff, 2016; Ralarala, Pineteh & Mchiza, 2016; Van Schalkwyk & McMillan, 2016; Masehela, 2015; Maurtin-Caincross, 2014; Mkhize & Cassimjee, 2013; Vandeyar, 2010; Mammen, 2006; Pienaar & Bester, 2006; Schulze, 2006; Mapesela & Strydom, 2004). Nevertheless, research centred on academic identities has traditionally focused on academics as 'professionals'; that is, it has focused on their level of education, job titles or whether they think of themselves as academics, professionals, administrators, managers, researchers, teachers or practitioners (Feather, 2010:192). However, recently much has been written on identity in the academic domain due to the need to understand how academics respond to an ever-changing environment and revise their professional roles (Billot & King, 2015:834; Schulze, 2014; Jawitz, 2009).

Therefore, this study is expected to make four important contributions: (1) it will explore how the construction of academic identities at NUL are related to lived experiences of participation in communities of practice (CoP) (Wenger, 1998:151). (2) It will examine how academic identities are negotiated within distinct CoP where academics participate as members at different ranks of academia (Vandeyar, 2010:916). (3) It will inquire how the returns of academic practice shape work attitudes and professional identities and (4) it will look into how academics' commitment to NUL influences the continuity of academic identities. Thus, it will demonstrate that academic identities are contextual and discursive of individual experiences and the prevailing situation within the university and its different CoP.

The results of this research are also expected to not only persuade the HE authorities to deliberate over the implications of academic identity on the quality of education and productivity, but to also provide the guidelines which management of HEIs in Lesotho may employ when developing effective employee retention policies. Additionally, the results may also assist university administrators to identify and enhance the factors that lead to increased levels of academic job satisfaction and motivation within and across disciplines. It may also give academic staff a platform to air their perceptions on what motivates and satisfies them about their work as well as whether those factors have an effect on their possible intention to quit academe or improve their job performance. Furthermore, the results could act as a basis for improving the working relationships between the management of HEIs and academic staff and provide the management with key information which would enable them not only to recruit and reward employees but also to promote and design strategies to retain high quality staff. Lastly, the findings could enable the Government of Lesotho (GoL) to address issues concerning academic staff in HEIs and offer suggestions on how to improve the competitive capacity of HEIs.

1.4 Theoretical overview

This study is informed by symbolic interactionism. As a framework, symbolic interactionism supplies assumptions and links theories of identities; it also indicates which concepts or variables are significant when studying identity construction (Serpe & Stryker, 2011:226). According to Vaughan and Hogg (2014:105), symbolic interactionism theorises the self as emerging from human interaction and involving the trading of shared symbols (language and gestures). As a micro-level theoretical framework, symbolic interactionism also views society as created and maintained through repeated interactions among individuals (Carter & Fuller, 2015:1). Further it views society as a differentiated yet organised mosaic of role relationships, groups, networks, organisations (Serpe & Stryker, 2011:232). Thus, symbolic interactionism basically involves an interrelation of people's self-concepts, perceptions of others' attitudes and responses to them (Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979:550).

Although the founding symbolic interactionists such as Charles Horton Cooley (1902), William Isaac Thomas and (1923), George Herbert Mead (1934) and Herbert Blumer (1969) did not address the concept of identity as they did the self, their writings laid the foundation for later interactionist treatments of identity (Vryan, Adler & Adler, 2003:367). Thus overtime interactionism evolved into two identity perspectives, situational and relational, out of which interactionist scholars developed the situated identity theory (SIT) and the identity theory (IT). These two theories are particularly relevant in this study since they explain how identities may either be constructed in the situation or in social relations.

In the situation, SIT states that identity formation is the result of social interaction; thus identities represent the relationship between the individual and the other actors at a certain time; it is crafted from the definition of the situation, social encounters and situated activity. Hence 'who one is' in social encounters defines one's 'behaviour'. Conversely, IT views the construction of identities as derived from the structure, cognition and interaction. The structural emphasis of IT opines that individuals construct either person, group or role identities to represent the many social relations that they partake in, while the perceptual emphasis states that identities are not only reflexive and symbolic in nature but they are also as realised through the interaction between actors and others.

Lastly, the interactional emphasis argues that identities have cultural expectations tied to social position in the social structure. Hence 'who' one is in social relations defines one's 'character'. These two theories are suited for directing the research questions exploring the ways in which academic identities are constructed, taking into consideration individual agency and structural influences.

1.5 Methodological approach

The nature of the study's research questions requires that in-depth and rich descriptions be obtained from academics; thus qualitative research methods were used because they focus on meanings in context. This then implies a data collection strategy which is sensitive to the underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data (Merriam, 2009:2). Narrative interviews were deemed fundamental to the purposes of this study because: (1) they allow for making connections between events, (2) they display the influence of time on actions, (3) they demonstrate individual goals and intentions and (4) they are agentic and explicitly show the individuals' hopes and intentions as they navigate life and experiences (McAlpine, Amundsen & Turner, 2014:955). Additionally, the open-ended character of the questions in the semi-structured interview guide not only defined the topic under investigation, but it provided opportunities for both the interviewer and the interviewee to discuss topics in detail (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995:1118).

The fieldwork for this study was undertaken between February and March 2015 at NUL where I conducted thirty-one in-depth interviews with academics. Normally, I did one interview every few days as I had to set and reschedule appointments and I was still at work fulltime. The advantage of doing one interview per day was that it gave me some leeway to transcribe interviews within a few days of their completion. During the interviews, I did not provide a definition of academic identities but I asked questions which allowed me to ascertain that participants knew who they were from describing their jobs and how they felt about them. I focused on aspects such as how they felt about their jobs, what they liked or disliked about them, their ability to finish assigned tasks on time and intention to quit or remain in academe. From their narratives, depictions of academic identity emerged and formed the basis for further discussion. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed manually using qualitative data analysis techniques. A more detailed description of the methodological approach of this study is presented in Chapter 4.

1.6 Ethical considerations

Before the data gathering phase of this study commenced, I was given the ethical clearance to conduct the study from the Ethics Committee of the Department of Sociology, UNISA¹ (see Addendum 1 and 2: UNISA Ethical Clearance) which I adhered to by ensuring confidentiality and informed consent. Firstly, I ensured that participants were aware of who would have access to their data as well as being provided

¹ The study was originally given ethical approval by the UNISA Department of Sociology under topic 'The Perceptions and Experiences of Job Satisfaction and Motivation Amongst Academic Staff in Higher Educational Institutions in Lesotho' on 08th August 2012. Later the topic changed to 'Narratives of the Construction of Academic Identities within the Lesotho Higher Education Milieu' and Ethical approval was granted on 02nd October 2017.

with details about the processes of anonymization of data (Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles, 2006:5). I guaranteed the promises of confidentiality that I made to participants by using pseudo names (Wiles et al. 2006:5), not indicating which faculty and department they worked in, as well as removing any names and identifiers where possible² (Corti, Day & Backhouse, 2000). Secondly, I ensured that participants joined the study voluntarily; I described in detail what the research entailed, including the risks and benefits of participation to enable informed consent. I also required participants to sign informed consent forms before the start of the interviews, mainly as proof that the respondent fully agreed to participate in the study and to be recorded (see Appendix A: Informed Consent Form). These steps are important for ensuring respect for persons during research (Mac et al, 2005:9; Wiles, Heath, Crow & Charles 2005:7).

1.7 Outline of the chapters

There are nine chapters in this thesis, each focusing on different aspects of the research topic 'Narratives of the Construction of Academic Identities within the Lesotho Higher Education Milieu'. As already shown, chapter one introduces and provides an outline of the entire thesis. The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter two conceptualises identities and presents symbolic interactionism as the theoretical framework of this study. The two symbolic interactionist perspectives on identity construction, SIT and IT, are used to analyse the data and to enhance the symbolic interactionist framework in terms of understanding the construction of academic identities.

Chapter three focuses on the construction of academic identities and the work experiences of academic staff in HEIs. It begins with the conceptualisation of academic identities as 'hybrids' derived from individual preferences, the institution's discipline-based communities and the profession. This chapter then reviews the literature on the internal and external constituencies of academic identities and their contribution to the development of academic identities. It finishes off with the work factors involved in the construction of academic identities and the state of the HE sector in Lesotho.

Chapter four focuses on the methodological approaches of the study. The rationale for the selection of sampling procedures, methods of data collection and data analysis techniques used in the study are also reviewed and justification given as to why they were the most appropriate for addressing the study's research questions. Lastly issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations for this study are explored and then the chapter concludes with an overview of the research setting and the participants.

² The pseudo names given to participants were assigned to them by the researcher. It was indicated that they need not give their real names in the informed consent form (see Appendix A). Additionally all participants gave consent to be recorded.

Chapter five is the first empirical chapter of the study. It highlights the personal, group and role-based nature of academic identities and focuses on the topic '*who am I as an academic?*' It answers the question; 'how do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL'? In concert with Alexander and Wiley's (1981) SIT, the findings reveal that academic identities are constructed from situationally derived meanings attached to lived experiences of teaching, multitasking and doing own work. Thus participants narratives displayed the meanings that established the identities which they wish to claim.

Chapter six is the second empirical chapter of the study. Based on McCall and Simmons' (1978) Interactive Approach to IT, this chapter investigates the embedded nature of academic identities. It emphasises the question, '*how do I act at work as an academic?*' and answers the question, 'how do reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to the membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff?' The findings reveal that work behaviours like managing time and balancing roles were used to meet cultural role expectations and to negotiate academic identities.

Chapter seven is the third empirical chapter of the study. It emphasises Burke's (1980) Cognitive Approach to IT and focuses on the professional nature of academic identities. Its main interest is on the question, '*am I fulfilled in this job as a professional?*' and answers the question 'How do descriptions of the (mis)alignment between work roles and individual values inspire and sustain meaningfulness for academics' professional self-concepts?' The findings show that professional academic identities derive from perceptions of a (mis)match between own values and various work facets such as job autonomy, workloads, students and recognition.

Chapter eight, as the fourth and last empirical chapter of the study, stresses the temporal nature of academic identities and focuses on the question, '*do I intend to remain in academia?*' Heavily reliant on Stryker's (1980) Structural Approach to IT, this chapter answers the question, 'how do internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influence academic identity trajectories?' The findings reveal that the meanings associated with 'being' an academic are not only in a process of change, but they also involve academics' moral frameworks. Therefore academics' altruism, passion, flexibility, options, disillusion and conflicts influence the future of academic identities at NUL.

Chapter nine is the concluding chapter of the study. It presents a summary of the main research findings, underscores their implications and links them to the findings of the previous empirical chapters. It also presents a model for the construction of academic identities and reflects on the theoretical framework, methodology and academic identities within the Lesotho HEIs. Lastly, this chapter offers

new directions in the sociology of professions and offers possible future research directions in academic identities in the Lesotho HE sector.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines the general orientation of the study. It presents the study background information, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions and objectives as well as the rationale and operational definition of major concepts. This chapter also presents an overview of the theoretical framework, methodology and ethical considerations of the study.

The ensuing chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORISING IDENTITIES AT NUL: DESCRIPTIVE OR PRESCRIPTIVE?

2.1 Introduction

The social order, as a network of social relationships and the social world as patterns of interaction that link individuals, have been found to have an intimate relationship with the construction of identities. This recognition of the symbolic and communal foundations of identity has led several scholars to focus on the connection between identity and social order (Jackson & Hogg, 2010:419). Consequently, identity scholars have been concerned with determining ‘the extent to which identities are chosen or ascribed, stable or dynamic, coherent or fragmented and motivated by desires for positive meaning and authenticity’ (Brown, 2014:23).

From this it could either be argued that individuals construct their identities because they are part of ‘give-and-take’ relationships; hence their behaviour is rational and goal oriented (aimed at maximising benefits and minimising costs) as espoused by The Rational Choice Theory (Hutchinson, 2008:52) or that the construction of identities is “experienced, understood and made use of in an activity of consciousness comprising both the perception of the object and the judgement about the object” (Moneta, 1976:1) as argued by Phenomenology. Even so, the main argument is that identity construction is intimately tied to and is “dependent on others’ judgements, evaluations and validations of the self and these can never be fully anticipated, let alone be controlled” (Knights & Clarke, 2014:2).

Since the symbolic interactionist perspectives or frames ‘underlie most sociological interest in identity’ (Serpe & Stryker, 2011:225), it was chosen for this study not only because it provides invaluable insight into human identity but also because it focuses on the relationship between social interaction and shared meanings in identity construction (Van den Berg, 2008:1). As a micro-level theoretical framework, symbolic interactionism came into being in an attempt to address how society is created and maintained itself through repeated interactions among individuals. Its emergence was a reaction to the tendency of mainstream sociological perspectives to adopt a ‘top-down’ approach when examining society. Retiring from this tradition, symbolic interactionism takes a ‘bottom-up’ approach and focuses on micro-level processes that emerge during face-to-face encounters in society (Carter & Fuller, 2015:1).

Consequently, the symbolic interactionist framework was chosen for this study since it states that: (1) an individual's 'acts' derive from meanings that objects or things have for him or her; (2) interaction occurs within a particular social and cultural contexts where people and situations must be defined or categorised based on individual meanings; (3) meanings emerge from interactions with other individuals and (4) meanings are continuously (re)created through interpreting the process during interaction with others (Carter & Fuller, 2015:1-2). Most relevant to this study is the view that symbolic interactionism conceives of individuals as free to act and to make their own choices and decisions. This is integral in the (re)creation of the social world (Carter & Fuller, 2015:1).

Nevertheless, there are two important variants in symbolic interactionist thinking on identity, the 'traditional' and the 'structural' symbolic interactionism. Whereas the traditional symbolic interactionism views an individuals' definitions and interpretations of themselves as well as others and their situations as basic to the development of identity (Burke & Stets, 2009:33), structural symbolic interactionism argues that identities are constructed as people act on shared meanings in the process of interaction (Katovich, Miller, & Steward, 2003:379). However, both frames are only suppliers of images, assumptions and concepts; as such, they cannot be evaluated through empirical research (Serpe & Stryker, 2011:226). Consequently, both were re-developed by interactionist identity scholars to produce testable theories, as this will be shown through the presentation of the SIT (traditional view) and the IT (structural view) respectively.

Accordingly, this chapter focuses on the IT and the SIT to theorise academic identities. Firstly, SIT states that identities depict the relationship between the individual and the other actors at a specified time (Owens, Robinson & Smith-Lovin et al., 2010:485). Therefore, situated identities define the relationships between the actor and the environment at any given point (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:274). In contrast, IT states that identities may be constructed either in relations, perceptions or from interaction. In relations, identities represent the relationships, positions and roles (Stryker & Burke, 2000:5); in interaction, identities are distinctive interpretations that individuals bring to their roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39; Stets, 2007:89) while cognitively identities represent the internal social structure (Stryker & Burke, 2000:11).

Thus both SIT and IT are relevant for this study since together they show that academic identities are based on interaction, relations, shared meanings, processes monitoring the situation, constraints in the current definition of the situation and the overall context of the social act. Thus both will be used to show that academic identities are interpretations of contextual relationships at NUL.

2.2 Conceptualising identities

“No one has a single identity...everyone must, consciously or not, identify with more than one group, one identity” (Lawler, 2008:2). Although the core idea in symbolic interactionism is that meanings (including self-meanings or identities) must be mutually shared by actors socially (Vryan et al. 2003:368); the key role-players in the identity formation process remain individuals, each with own distinctive characteristics and capabilities (Bothma, Lloyd & Khapova, 2015:24). Nevertheless, it remains quite difficult to give identity a short and adequate summary statement that captures the range of its meanings, even though people know how to use the word ‘identity’ properly in daily conversations (Fearon, 1999:2; Feather, 2010:189).

Even so, due to its importance in human lives, different authors have attempted to define identity. For example, Deng (1995:1) defines identity as the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others while Stone (1962:93) views it as a public component of the self as it stems from interaction with others. Bamberg (2010:4) adds that an identity is a ‘label’ used to differentiate and incorporate people’s sense of self into different social and personal dimensions while Moore (2001:82) views it as nothing more than people’s image of themselves and their place in the world. Jenkins (1996:4) views an identity as the way individuals and collectivises distinguish themselves in their social relations with other individuals and collectivises while Wendt (1992) states that an identity is a relatively stable, role-specific understanding and expectations about the self.

For McAdams (1999:486), an identity is the internalised and evolving story that results from a person’s selective appropriation of the past, present and future while Hogg and Abrams (1988:2) and Lawler (2008:2) define it as people’s concepts of ‘who’ they are and how they relate to others. From the varying conceptualisations of identity, it seems that identity is a mixture of an individual’s personal experiences and the images of the wider world and their place in it provided by agents of socialisation such as schools, media, peers and family (Moore, 2001:12). Identity therefore makes up one’s self-concept or what comes to mind when one thinks of oneself (Oyserman, Elmore & Smith, 2012:69); thus identities are not natural but are constructed (Hall, 1996:5).

Symbolic interactionism is based on the fundamental premise that society and self mutually shape and influence each other (Hunt, 2003:179); thus the self is a multifaceted result of interactions with others (Farmer & Van Dyne, 2010:503). Consequently, there are three main bases of an identity; role, social and person identities. Firstly, ‘role identities’ are derived from integrating with significant others and on tailored bonds of attachment aimed at protecting or enhancing significant others (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001:2). They also emerge from reciprocal influence of networks in interactions and they vary across situations and contexts (Carter & Fuller, 2015:4).

Individuals are said to play roles depending on the group that they are in; as such, groups represent interpersonal relations which portray larger structural units which connect people to the social structure (Dolch, 2003:404). Thus role identities are meanings tied to a role and together with the expectations tied to its social position (Stets & Burke, 2003:129). Therefore role identities define who we are and how we behave in normatively specified ways; thus they provide a sense of purpose and meaning in life and behavioural guidance (Hunt, 2003:179). They are also important since they signal identities and enable individuals to classify themselves and allow others to anticipate their behaviour as actors in those roles (Leung, Zietsma & Peredo, 2014:426).

In contrast, 'social identity' refers to meanings tied to or derived from the social group (Burke & Stets, 2003:129). Thus a social group (as a set of individuals who share the view that they are members of the same social category) is composed of people who are socially compared to and categorised with the self and are labelled the 'in-group' while persons who differ from the self are compared to and categorised as the 'outgroup'. Groups have distinguishing features for the in-group and the out-group members as well as provisioning for some differentiation among the in-group members (Burke & Stets, 2009:118). Burke and Stets (2009:119) add that uniformity of perception among in-group members helps them to develop a sense of "we" or "us" (toward the in-group) and "them" (toward the out-group).

The concept of a *group prototype* encapsulates such features and is therefore critical in understanding this internal differentiation. It refers to the groups' interconnected perceptions, attitudes, feelings and behaviour. Group prototype shows the similarities among in-group members as well as differences between in-group members and out-groups members (Burke & Stets, 2009:118). Group prototype therefore represents the degree to which a group member is typical of the stereotypical attributes of the group as a whole such as being most like in-group members and most different from out-group members (Burke & Stets, 2009:118-119). When individuals perceive themselves as exemplifying an in-group model, this signifies that a process of *depersonalization* has occurred; that is, rather than seeing themselves as *unique* individuals, members of the in-group see themselves in terms of the ideal attributes of in-group members (Burke & Stets, 2009:119).

Lastly, "person identity" rather than "personal identity" is used to refer to meanings that define an individual as a unique individual rather than as a role-holder or a group member (Stets & Burke, 2009:124). Thus person identity involves seeing oneself as a unique and distinct individual, different from others; hence it is idiosyncratic (Hogg, 2006:115). Person identities derive from self-concepts or people's entire thoughts, feelings, self-evaluations and imaginations of who they are; thus they are meanings that individuals hold about themselves, based on their observations, inferences, wishes, desires and how others act toward them (Stets & Burke, 2003:5). A person identity also depicts the meanings that define a person as a unique individual; hence it is the basis of one's self-concept (Burke

& Stets, 2009:124). In this way, person identity not only represents an individual's biography of everyday life at a specific time but it also relates to relational behavioural styles shaped by a person's actual life experiences and cultural history (Cote & Levine, 2015:27). Even so, person identities operate across various roles and situations; therefore, they are more likely to be activated across more situations than role and social identities because they refer to important aspects of the individual.

Since person identities are an essential ingredient of who a person is, individuals cannot just 'put on' and 'take them off' as they might 'take on' and then 'exit' particular roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:125). In this way, person identities are more likely to feature prominently in interaction since they are constantly activated and thus are generally very high in salience. Hence, person identities operate like master identities. Conceptually, this means that person identities would be ranked higher than role or social identities. As a result, the meanings in the person identity influence the meanings held in one's role and social identities (Burke & Stets, 2009:126).

The above definitions and classifications of identity help to classify different aspects of identity and this is useful not only in attempting to describe and interpret who academics are and how they find meaning for their academic identities, but it is also helpful in addressing the principal research question of this research, namely: **'How do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities?'** As already shown in Chapter 1, academic identity not only plays an integral role in the well-being and productivity of academic staff but it also positively influences their need to teach, to improve their skills, to acquire satisfaction from teaching and, ultimately, from student learning (Lieff et al. 2012: 208). Thus the above cited distinctions may enhance an insight into academic identity by examining under which conditions the study participants construct academic identities which 'label', 'define' and 'portray' who they are and how they relate to others.

Thus the construction of academic identities at NUL is expected to portray the relatively stable, role-specific understanding and expectations about the self (Wendt, 1992) as well as way in which individuals distinguish themselves from others in their social relations (Jenkins, 1996:4). Even so, two issues in the conceptualisation of identity must be addressed here: firstly, McAdams' (1999:486) conceptualisation of identity states that it is an internalised and evolving 'story' that results from a person's selective appropriation of past, present and future. Thus, it seems that telling a 'good story' is important for helping people create meaning for their identities (Brown, 2014:23). Therefore, study participants are expected to use accounts, stories, justifications, disclaimers and other vocabularies of motives to express their identities (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010:137). In this way, the notion of identity as a narrative is especially critical for understanding how identity dynamics in work roles help academics as individuals sustain feelings of stability despite constant changes in the workplace (Ibarra &

Barbulescu, 2010:135-136). Thus narratives are critical to academic identity construction because they help people to organise, account for and give meaning and structure to their circumstances, events and fragmented experiences. Secondly, narratives are useful in the construction of academic identities because they are created, experienced and shared by individuals in action and interaction with others (Anderson, 1997:212-213); therefore narratives situate individuals in history and enable them to share assembled stories from memory, context and intention (Anderson, 1997:213-214). The second issue in the conceptualisation of identity relates to Hall's stance that identities are not natural but are constructed (1996:5). For Pratt (2012:22) although identity construction often refers to how identities come to be formed, the notion 'identity work'³ is a more specific description of how identities are crafted. This is because although identity work takes place in the present, it reflects an individual's entire life course; thus, identity work is influenced strongly by who an individual was in the past and who he would like to be in the future (Brown, 2014:24).

Another important element in identity work is seeking an 'authentic' self; that is authenticity depicts the self's loyalty to own history, customs and beliefs. Thus being authentic shows consistency between the core and behaviours exhibited (Brown, 2014:29) as well as being 'true' or 'real' across time and situations (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010:140). I would like to indicate here that engaging in identity work when constructing or negotiating academic identities implies that academics not only categorise themselves, but they also imbue their self-images with meanings which are appropriated as part of their identities (Beech, 2008:52). Thus academics actively craft academic identities which express their 'authentic selves'; in this way, 'becoming' an academic is not a smooth, straightforward, linear or automatic process (Archer, 2008:387), rather it is dialectical and reflexive (Brown, 2014:29).

Overall, from the conceptualisation of identity, four issues emerge: (1) academic identities are labels derived from roles, the group and individual uniqueness. (2) The construction of academic identities is a continuous, reflexive and dialogic process which derives from mutual relations and the situation. (3) The construction of academic identities is not only agentic (chosen by academics as resourceful and autonomous beings), but is also structural (ascribed to academics by historical and institutional structures they are part of). (4) The construction of academic identities derives from stories is aimed at creating authentic selves at work. For that reason, academic identities are 'practical'; they are descriptions under which academics value themselves and find their actions at work worth undertaking (Atkins, 2008:1).

³ Identity work is not to be confused with work identity. Work identity refers to a work-based self-concept, derived from the organisational, occupational group and other identities which a person adopts and the corresponding behaviours adopted at work (Walsh & Gordon, 2008:3). In contrast, identity work to a range of activities individuals engage in to create, present, and sustain identities that are congruent with and supportive of their self-concept (Snow & Anderson, 1987:1348).

2.3 Theorising Academic Identities: The Interactionist perspective

The symbolic interactionist theory assumes that people acquire self-conceptions through the process of taking the role of the other (Blumer, 1969; Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). Therefore, humans know who they are, in a social sense, through seeing themselves in the eyes of other people (Hunt, 2003:179). Symbolic interactionism also states that the self is formed from other's responses to an individual as well as people's own definition and interpretations (Stryker, 2008:18-19; Hunt, 2003:179). Further, symbolic interactionism states that individuals act based on the meanings objects have for them; thus interaction is contextual and situational. Meanings are also assumed to emerge from shared interactions and are continuously (re)created through interpreting processes during interaction with others (Carter & Fuller, 2015:1-2).

Although interactionists such as Cooley (1902), Thomas (1923), Mead (1934), and Blumer (1969) did not address the concept of identity as they addressed the self, their writings laid the foundation for later interactionists and allowed them to seek a deeper understanding of how identity is formed in the situation and relations (Vryan et al., 2003:367). Introduced by the works of Mead (1934) and Cooley (1902), identity studies form a critical cornerstone within the modern sociological thought (Cerulo, 1997:385). Since then, identity theorists have been operating under the assumption that people care about themselves and desire to know who they are; this desire for self-knowledge not only helps them to make sense of the world, but it influences their motivation, thoughts, actions and their ability to control themselves (Oyserman et al., 2012:70). As such, identity construction entails the different ways in which conceptions of the self are forged in relations with others and with regards to existing notions of the self (Lawson & Garrod, 2001:116).

2.3.1 Identity theory

Identity Theory (IT) views the self and identity with reference to Mead's (1934) dictum that the '*self mirrors society*'. That is, the self is seen as reflexive and capable of taking itself as an object; thus it constructs an identity through a process of identification where it classifies or names itself in relation to other social categories or classifications (Stets & Burke, 2000:224). Thus IT's main goal is to understand and explain how social structures impact the self and how the self impacts social behaviours (Stryker & Burke, 2000:2). Stets and Burke (2000:225-226) add that identification in terms of membership in particular groups or roles also makes up one's identity derived from reflexive self-views. Therefore the self is capable of viewing, naming or categorising itself as an object to contrast it with other social categories or classifications (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). However, IT adopts a multi-faceted sense of self, envisioning its various parts as sometimes conflicting and sometimes independent of one another (Stryker, 2008:19). As an exponent of structural symbolic interactionism, IT has evolved in three

different, yet strongly related, directions. The first concentrates on how social structures impact the self and social behaviour as presented in the work of Stryker (1980) and Stryker and Serpe (1982). The second concentrates on the interaction and reflexive interpretations while the third examines how internal dynamics of self-processes have an impact on social behaviour, as presented by Burke (1991), Burke and Reitzes (1991) and Burke and Stets (1999). Therefore, the relationship between these three viewpoints not only expands the view of structural symbolic interactionism but it also suggests new applications of the interactionist frame (Stryker & Burke, 2000:2-3). The term “structural symbolic interactionism” was coined by Stryker (1980) to refer to a set of ideas about the nature of the individual and the relationship between the individual and society. This set of ideas draws upon the writings of a large number of symbolic interactionists such as Cooley (1902), Thomas (1923), and Mead (1934).

In structural symbolic interactionism, the self is seen as emerging in social interaction within the context of a complex differentiated society. This is because people occupy different positions within society, thus the self reflects this differentiation into components or what James (1890) called ‘multiple selves’. Each of these smaller ‘selves’ within the overall self is called an identity (Burke & Stets, 2009:10). Thus, the self as a father, as an academic, as a colleague or any other myriad of possibilities corresponding to the various roles one may play, is called an identity. Each of these is a different identity, and each may act as an agent instigating behaviour within the different roles. Therefore, identities are important because they provide us with ties to others and to what is social in a situation (Burke & Stets, 2009:10). However, culture avails the categories that people use to name the various roles and groups which make up the social structure (Burke, 2004:6).

Within the social structure, people as occupants of social positions apply to themselves and to others names as well as meaning and expectations associated with them as identities. Thus we are intimately tied to, and become a part of, the social structure that is named in the cultural categories. These named categories or identities define people in terms of positions that they occupy in society. They are also relational in the sense that they tie individuals together. Therefore an in-built link exists between identity and social structure. The nature of that link, however, varies across identities and exerts an influence on both the identity and the structure (Burke, 2004:6).

Accordingly, to the interactionist perspective, meaning is at the center of an identity, thus self-relevant meanings link identity and the social structure. Burke (2004:7) argues that although some of the dimensions of meaning may be wired into humans biologically, most are learned through shared experience, observation and instruction. Hence humans learn the categories or identities as well as the meanings and expectations associated with them, from others around them and from the culture in which they are embedded (Burke, 2004; Stryker 1980). However, meanings are very often local; that is they are shared only within local settings of the social structure. This allows for a coordinated interaction,

communication and control of resources within the setting. Thus as people move into roles and join groups, they absorb the specifics of the shared meanings that allow them to interact in that local setting (Burke, 2004:7).

2.3.1.1 Interactional perspective

The interactional emphasis of IT was developed by McCall and Simmons (1978) who are regarded as the founders of modern work in IT (Burke & Stets, 2009:39). In their interactional approach to IT, McCall and Simmons (1978) state that the construction of an identity involves 'naming' which includes all the things (together with the self and other) that give meaning to people's plans and activities (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). They also view an identity as one's imaginative view (how one likes to view oneself) as an actor and as an occupant of a particular position (Burke & Stets, 2009:39). However, they state that identities have an idiosyncratic dimension (the identity of role identities) which involves the distinctive interpretations that individuals bring to their roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39; Stets, 2007:89).

The central concept in IT for McCall and Simmons (1978) is a role identity. They view it as one's imaginative view based on how one likes to think of and acts as an occupant of a particular social position. McCall and Simmons (1978) also posit that role identities have either a *conventional* or an *idiosyncratic* dimension. With regard to the conventional aspect, they state that role identities comprise the cultural expectations tied to social positions in the social structure that actors try to meet. Conversely, the idiosyncratic aspect of role identities is viewed as the distinctive interpretations that individuals bring to their roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39).

To illustrate this point, Burke and Stets (2009:39) state that a professor identity typically entails conventional meanings of one as an educator and a researcher. However, some professors may add idiosyncratic dimensions such as "friend to students" or "protector of students" to their conventional identity which is not usually found in the professor identity. As such, individuals can rigidly adhere to the culturally defined behaviours attached to the roles or they can adopt unique behaviours in such a way that they become unrecognisable to others (Burke & Stets, 2009:39).

The issue here is that people are capable of bringing their own interpretations of what an identity means to them when they occupy a position and play a role; as such meanings for role identities are both shared and idiosyncratic (Stets, 2007:89). McCall and Simmons (1978) are therefore interested in how the self influences behaviour, due to the realisation that behaviour emerges in interaction. They also tend to focus on aspects of exchange such as negotiation, bargaining and rewards as well as the costs that facilitate or impede action (Burke & Stets, 2009:39). This interest was influenced by their early interest in "the importance of negotiation in working out the differential performances, relationships and

interconnections of roles within a group or interaction context” (Stets & Burke, 2000:227). This element of McCall and Simmons’ interactional approach to IT is therefore appropriate for responding to the first subsidiary question: **How do reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff?** Since McCall & Simmons (1978) view an identity as the preferred ‘character’ that individuals create for themselves as occupants of specific social positions, they argue that the negotiation of identities is intended to portray individuals’ preferred self-perceptions when occupying certain social positions (Owens et al., 2010:481; Stets & Burke, 2009:11). McCall and Simmons’ interactional perspective on IT also shows that the negotiation of identities results in unique interpretations that individuals bring to their roles and how those are negotiated with others in interaction (Stets, 2007:205; Burke & Stets, 2009:39).

As Turner (1962:24) states, roles cannot exist without relevant other-roles toward which they are oriented. Thus, if people enact or perform their roles well, other’s appraisals of approval will make them feel good. Similarly, when they perform well in a role; they attain a sense of control over their environment (Burke & Stets, 2000:5). As primary sources of personal action, McCall and Simmons (1978) contend that identities are ‘role’ identities and they influence peoples’ everyday lives. However, people are capable of creativity and improvisation in the performance of their roles, even within the overall requirements and restrictions of their social position(s). This element is expected to be helpful in explaining the different strategies which academics employ to negotiate who they are at work.

In this way, McCall and Simmons’ (1978) approach illuminated the intermingling of the academics’ idiosyncrasies and impulsiveness of behaviour, as constrained by social convention through the dialogue between the ‘I’ and the ‘me’ (Owens et al. 2010:481). Similar to Stryker (1968,1980), McCall and Simmons (1978) also believe that individuals have multiple identities due to the different positions that they hold in society. However, they state that these multiple identities are arranged in prominence hierarchies respectively (Stets, 2007:205). The prominence hierarchy refers to the role identities which are most important or enduring for actors; thus it not only represents the ideal self but it also characterises the actors’ priorities which guide their behaviour across situations and time.

Consequently, when individuals are faced with a situation where they must choose an identity in a situation, they choose the most prominent (Stets, 2007:205). McCall and Simmons (1978) also observe that some situations do not allow the enactment of prominent role identities since ‘others’ do not support such roles; hence they cease being prominent; instead they become salient identities (Stets, 2007:205). They further contend that individuals universally seek role support for aspects of the self which they value; hence they enact identities congruent with that self to maximize role-support (McCall & Simmons, 1966:73).

For this reason, McCall and Simmons (1978) speak of the significance of 'negotiation' among actors so that mutually sustaining identities can be obtained (Stets, 2007:205). The interactional perspective also states that a person's 'emotions' emerge when a prominent identity is challenged in interaction; that is, others in the situation do not agree that the individual's behaviour is consistent with the identity that the person is claiming or performing (Stets, 2007:205; Burke & Stets, 2009:159). This lack of support for one's behaviour has a tendency to produce negative feelings for the individual. As a result, the person may decide to employ strategies such as selective perception, rationalising own behaviour, rejecting non-supportive others or even withdrawing from the situation (Burke & Stets, 2009:159; Stets, 2007:205). This element is expected to be helpful in showing how academics deal with situations in their work when they are unable to fulfil the cultural expectations attached to their roles as academics.

McCall and Simmons (1978) further state that when individuals face negative emotions or threats to their identity they employ 'defence mechanisms'. These are essentially tactics that people use to protect themselves from the pain associated with negative feelings. Besides defence mechanisms, people may also employ 'projection' whereby they assign negative feelings to others rather than attributing those feelings to themselves. Alternatively, they may use 'displacement' where they direct their negative feelings towards others (Burke & Stets, 2009:160). Nevertheless, although IT historically focused on role identities, it has since broadened its perspective to include other bases of identities such as person and social identity.

2.3.1.2 Cognitive perspective

The perceptual emphasis of IT was developed by Peter J. Burke (1980, 1991; Burke & Tully, 1977). Burke's perspective of IT follows the symbolic interactionist's idea that identity is self-meaning developed in the context of meanings of roles and counter-roles (Stryker & Burke, 2000:7). Integrating ideas from both Stryker (1980) and McCall and Simmons (1978), Burke (1980) extended IT by delineating five theoretical properties of identities from an interactionist view of the self: (1) identities are self-meanings; (2) identities are relational; (3) identities are reflexive; (4) identities affect behaviour indirectly and (5) identities motivate (MacKinnon, 1994:88).

These elements of Burke's interactional approach to IT are appropriate for responding to the second research question: **How do descriptions of the (mis)alignment between work roles, expectations and individual values influence meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics' professional self-concepts?** Burke's (1980) approach to IT focuses on the "internal dynamics that operate for any one identity" (Burke & Stets, 2009:48). Burke's (1980) cognitive approach to IT also focuses on the internal social structure and its impact on identity construction; it also focuses on internal, cognitive identity processes (Stryker & Burke, 2000:11).

The cognitive approach views identities as not only reflexive and symbolic in nature but also as realised through interaction between actors and others (Burke & Reitzes, 1981:84). Burke's (1980) approach further argues that there is a shared link between identity and behaviour. That is, when the meaning of an identity matches with the meaning of the behaviour, then identities predict behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2009:49; Stryker & Burke, 2000:8). Burke (1980) argues that from interpersonal social interaction, people evaluate feedback from others to determine whether their identities or self-views are being backed by others or not. They then take feedback that they receive from others and compare it with their identity meanings; if these meanings match, individuals feel emotionally neutral or positive. However, if they do not match, they tend to experience negative emotions which motivate them to change their behaviour in the situation to align feedback with self-views (Cantwell, 2016:572).

This element of Burke's cognitive approach is expected to describe the process that individuals use to maintain their self-meanings and to ensure that those self-views are communicated consistently in situations. Burke (1980) also views an identity as composed of four basic components, namely, inputs, identity standards, comparators and outputs (Burke & Stets, 2009:62). Firstly, the *identity standard* (as a set of culturally prescribed meanings held by individuals) defines role identities in a situation. Thus it represents the core of an identity since it is the set of meanings that serve as a 'standard' or 'reference' for who one is (Sharp & Kidder, 2013:354; Burke, 2004:5).

Identity standards are culturally prescribed; that is, they are meanings held by individuals that help them to define their identities in situations (Stryker & Burke, 2000:9; Burke & Stets, 2009:63). In this way each identity that a person holds has a separate standard containing the meanings that define that identity (Burke & Stets, 2009:63). Thus for Burke (2004:5) an identity is a set of meanings that people hold for themselves that define 'what it means' to be who they are as individuals, role occupants and group members. He further argues that when the self is an occupant of a role, and the incorporation of meanings and expectations of that role do not align, then people perform actions to align them. For example, when an academic identifies with being a researcher, he or she will continue on ordinary courses of action of being a researcher. However, if someone accuses them of not being a researcher, then he or she may 'perform actions to align self-perceptions with the identity standard' (Sharp & Kidder, 2013:354).

Secondly, *inputs* (perceptions of the self in the situation) tell the individual about their environment or what is happening around them (Burke & Stets, 2009:64). In terms of identities, perceptions are the inputs to identities or meanings in the situations that are relevant to the identity. Thus, inputs are perceptions that imply something about the identity of an individual (Burke & Stets, 2009:65). According to Burke (2004:5), if an interactive situation and the perceived situational meanings are disturbed to the extent that they no longer match the standards, people act in such a way that they counteract those

disturbances and restore the match in meanings between perceptions and standard. This process of restoring meaning is called the *self-verification* process. As a central cognitive process in the identity theory, self-verification involves seeing the self as embodied in the identity standard or the cognitive representation of a role containing the meanings and norms that the person associates with the role. Therefore, self-verification occurs where an individual behaves in order to maintain consistency with the identity standard. Self-verification also underlies role taking, role making and group formation as the person acts to portray the identity (Stets & Burke, 2000:232). Burke's approach to IT also views emotions as playing a key role in the feedback loop between identity standards and inputs (self-perceptions). He states that positive emotions such as pride and satisfaction act as signals of alignment between standards and perceptions and drive people to continue normal courses of action. Conversely, negative emotions such as anger or sadness act as signals of misalignment between standards and perceptions and motivate people to repair this misalignment (Sharp & Kidder, 2013:354).

Thirdly, the *comparator* (mechanisms that compare the perceived situational meanings with those of the identity standard) compares the input perceptions of meanings relevant to the identity with the memory meanings of the identity standard and registers the difference or error between them (Cantwell, 2016:575; Burke & Stets, 2009:63-67; Stets & Burke, 2003:108). If the meanings match, the self is verified and self-meanings are supported in the situation. However, if the meanings do not match the identity standard, then the individual experiences a discrepancy and emotions result from this comparison process (Cantwell, 2016:575).

Lastly, the *output* is the emotion, activity or behaviour of the individual which is the result of the difference between the identity standard and perceptions. Thus the outputs represent the behaviour in the situation, hence the meaning or symbolic value of the behaviour is relevant to the extent that it changes the meanings in the situation (Burke & Stets, 2009:63-67; Stryker & Burke, 2000:9). Overall, Burke's (1980) IT views behaviour as a result of the relationship between perceptions in the situation and the self-meanings held by the individual. Burke (1980) also views behaviour as being goal-directed and prone to change, depending on the demands of the situation in order to match meanings in the situation with meanings held in the standard (Stryker & Burke, 2000:9). Additionally, Burke's (1980) cognitive model of IT views emotion as the result of the relationship between perceived self-meanings in the situation and the self-definitional meanings held in the identity standard (Stryker & Burke, 2000:10). Hence, a mismatch or increasing discrepancy between perceived self-meanings in the situation results in a negative emotion, while a match or decreasing discrepancy results in positive emotions. Emotions are also recognised as having their own consequences (both for the individual experiencing them and on others) as outward expressions of the state of the individual. Emotions then signal to self and others a person's internal state, making that state part of the situation to which all parties, including the self must respond (Stryker & Burke, 2000:10).

2.3.1.3 Structural perspective

The structural emphasis of IT was developed by Sheldon Stryker (1968, 1980). His model of IT focuses on the external social structure and its impact on identity construction; this is why it is called the *structural* approach IT. His primary goal was to build the social structure into symbolic-interactionist explanations of the self-structure since he believed “selves reflect society, and society is complexly differentiated and yet organised, selves must be completely differentiated and organised too” (Thoits & Virshup, 1997:112). His conceptualisation of IT also deals most directly with identity as an agent of action (Burke & Stets, 2009:61; Stryker, 2008:19). For Stryker, society is composed of enduring patterns of interactions and relationships that are different yet organised; thus individuals live their lives in small networks of social relationships by playing out roles that support their membership in these networks. The interactions and relationships that exist within groups, organisations, communities and institutions are influenced by the larger social structure within which the networks are embedded (Burke & Stets, 2009:45).

As such, Stryker believed that Mead’s (1934) work on taking the role of the other is a ‘frame’ rather than a coherent theory with testable propositions (Stryker, 2008:17) because it lacks demonstration of the structural aspects of interaction (Carter & Fuller, 2015:5). Therefore, Stryker attempted to bridge this gap in his formulation of a role theory of symbolic interactionism (Dolch, 2003:404). What sets Stryker apart is his emphasis on ‘reflexive thinking’ in relation to roles of an individual, where he viewed an individual’s roles as involving both the position that he or she holds (status) and the expectations for behaviour associated with those statuses (Dolch, 2003:403). Stryker (1980) argued that reflexive thinking was an important aspect of role taking for it enabled people to put themselves in another’s place or to view the world as others do through the utilization of symbols.

In this way, role taking is an anticipatory act between people; that is, when taking the role of the other, one organises a definition of other’s attitudes, orientations and future responses which are then (re)shaped and validated during interaction (Stryker, 1980:62). Stryker also believes socialisation is critical in identity formation as it helps people to learn normative behaviour as it relates to role relationships (Carter & Fuller, 2015:5). Stets (2006:89) concurs and states that “to see the overall self, we must envision it as encompassing many different parts or identities, each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure”. Therefore, for Stryker (2000:24) individuals have role identities that are situationally specific; hence they have many different selves which correspond to the different positions they hold in groups (Stets, 2007:89). As such, role identities generally have a large set of meanings which individuals may use to describe what a particular role means to them. This element of Stryker’s structural approach to IT is expected to provide answers to the third subsidiary question: **How do internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influence academic**

identity trajectories? The argument here is that irrespective of the content of the chosen role identity, its meanings relate to the meanings implied by one's behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2009:115). Thus, Stryker (2008:20) views social behaviour is nothing more than taking "role choice" or deciding to meet expectations of one role rather than another. He emphasises the social structural sources of identity and the relations among identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000:10). Consequently his approach argues that identities are not situation specific; instead, they can be carried by people into the many situations that they experience, thereby affecting their conduct in those situations (Stryker, 2008:20).

Besides having multiple identities, Stryker's IT states that individuals' identities are ordered in a salience hierarchy or the likelihood that an identity will be invoked in a variety of situations (Stryker, 2008:20). This sentiment is reflected in his concept of identity salience which he developed to incorporate the social structure theoretically (Thoits & Virshup, 1997:112). Stryker (1980) argued that identity salience is a condition of the self, developed from its multifacetedness; thus role choice is the result of identity salience or commitment to an identity which is most important for an individual (Burke & Stets, 2000:12). Stryker defines commitment in terms of the number of social ties or the affective importance of the social ties upon which each identity is predicated" (Thoits & Virshup, 1997:112). For example, an individual's commitment to the position of an 'academic' depends on the importance of that position to him or her and the individuals that require him or her to remain in that position and play that role.

Therefore, identity salience implies that individuals are more likely to define situations that they enter in ways which will make their most significant identity relevant, thus enabling them to enact that identity (Burke & Stets, 2000:12). For Stryker (1980) this aspect of commitment reflects density of ties or the social structure in which an identity is embedded (Burke & Stets, 2000:12). Additionally, since the extent of one's relationships with others also depends on being a particular kind of person and playing out particular roles, then one is committed to being that kind of person (Stryker, 2008:20) such as a divorcee, rebel or a shy person (Thoits & Virshup, 1997:112). Thus, for Stryker (1980) identities may or may not be confirmed in situationally-based interaction (Burke & Stets, 2000:12).

In this way, Stryker's view of identities derives from the view that one's social position allows the 'types of person possible' in a given society. His broader conception of identity then encompass not only social roles but socio-demographic characteristics, social types of person and personality traits (although his focus remains on roles) (Thoits & Virshup, 1997:112). This view speaks to Giddens's (1984) Structuration Theory which seeks to explain the 'duality of structure' or the relationship between human agents and the wider social systems and structures which they live in. Here Giddens (1984) argues that structure enters into the constitution of the agent and into the practices that this agent produces. Thus the structure is not only a significant medium of the practices of agents but is equally the outcome of those practices (Stones, 2005:4-5).

To conclude, IT showed that 'identity' refers to parts of the self which are composed of meanings that people attach to the multiple roles that they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies (Stryker & Burke, 2000:284). It also offers three different, yet strongly related, directions to theorising identities (1) interactional perspective, (2) the cognitive perspective and (3) the structural perspective. Firstly, McCall and Simmons' (1978) interactional emphasis focuses on the cultural expectations tied to social positions in the social structure which actors try to fulfil. Thus they view the construction of an identity as the preferred 'characters' that individuals create for themselves as occupants of specific social positions.

Secondly, the perceptual emphasis of IT as developed by Burke (1980) highlights the internal social structure dynamics of IT, based on the identity standard, inputs, comparator and outputs. Thus Burke's (1980) approach to IT views identities as not only reflexive and symbolic in nature but also as realised through interaction between actors and others. Lastly, Stryker's (1980) structural emphasis focuses on the external social structure and its impact on identity construction and argues that identities are not situation specific; instead, they can be carried by people into the many situations that they experience, thereby affecting their conduct in those situations (Stryker, 2008:20).

2.3.2 Situated identity theory

Situationally centred interactionists have a tendency to focus on the process by which identity becomes attached to people in the ongoing course of interaction. As such, they view identity as an 'emergent' process continually created and affecting people's behaviour (Katovich et al., 2003:378; Vryan et al. 2003:378). Interactionists who take a situational approach to identity therefore emphasise situational sources and features of identity. They also emphasise processes through which people construct meaning for the situations that they encounter and for the behaviour that they undertake. Therefore this approach focuses on the self in the daily face-to-face interactions, as it unfolds in its natural environment; that is, it focuses on how individuals define situations and how they construct the realities that they live in (Arena & Arrigo, 2006:53-54). Alexander and Wiley's (1981) SIT borrows from Mead (1934), Goffman (1959), Stone (1962) and McCall and Simmons (1966) to explore how situational role taking encourages reflexivity and adoption of others' dispositions to facilitate social interaction (Delamater, Myers & Collett, 2015:132).

For example in *Mind, Self and Society* Mead (1934) presents the 'I-me' distinction where he argues that the self comes into being due to the constellation of responses from the perspective of the (or a) generalised other. Thus in his view the self is a cognitive object made up of 'me' or the organised set of attitudes of others which one assumes while the 'I' is the response of an individual to the attitudes of others (Aboulafia, 1991:9). Therefore, the 'I' and the 'me' should be thought of as the *subject* and *object*

phases of a cognitive structuring arising within the conduct of an individual once that conduct has acquired a sufficient level of social complexity (Burke & Everett, 2013:101) or as Aboulafia (1991:8) puts it “our actions will become ever more rational as we have ever greater contact with the perspectives of others”. This implies that humans have the unique ability to think of and refer to themselves as if they were someone else (Johnson, 1995:229) or what Archer (2007:63) refers to as ‘reflexivity’. She argues that as an inner dialogue reflexivity is a ‘personal emergent property (PEP) whose chief aim is to silently facilitate the relationship between people’s ability to pose questions to themselves (and to answer them) and to speculate about themselves. Thus it is through self-talk that individuals define their ultimate concerns (personal identities) or develop social identities (social concerns) emergent from the manner in which they personify external talk and align it with their social roles (Archer, 2007:64). Alexander and Wiley (2004:274) therefore view “identity formation is the fundamental process of social perception and the cornerstone of interaction”.

As part of the situational symbolic interaction, their theory argues that identities are not individual properties or features found in the structure; instead they depict the relationship between the individual and the other actors at a particular time (Owens et al. 2010:485). Therefore, situated identities are not forced or controlled by people, nor are they located in some externalised environmental structure. Rather, they define the relationships between the actor and the environment at any given point. For that reason, situated identities depict social reality and the complex of situated identities generated from people’s perspectives relative to the events in the social field (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:274). Thus when members of a group agree on the meanings of particular identities and their appropriate behaviours, they can direct their behaviour to generate the meanings that establish the identities that they wish to claim (Delamater et al., 2015:132).

Thus situated identities could be conceptualised as the *face* that people display publicly in interaction. It relates to Goffman’s (1959) presented self, hence it does not require any commitment from the actor or audience for it to be a true reflection of the self (Blumstein, 1991: 306). Delamater et al. (2015:130) also state that ‘self-concepts most likely to enter the situated self are those distinctive to the setting and relevant to the ongoing activities’. Therefore, people do not ‘have’ or own an ‘identity. Rather, it emerges and is acknowledged in situations; thus people live in the identity process (Altheide, 2000:4). Delamater et al. (2015:130) add that when individuals describe themselves on different occasions, their identities, personal qualities and self-evaluations depend on the situation that they describe themselves from, not from the errors of reporting. As such, situated identities define people’s self-images at any particular time and space (Mackinnon, 1994:62). For me these arguments speak to the link between inner speech and agency. While inner speech helps to construct the face that individuals present in social encounters, agency depicts the purposive and conscious human action behind the face presented.

According to Wiley (2010:17) the link between inner speech and agency involves, (1) the mental construction or design of a possible action; (2) the actual choosing of this or alternative actions from options available and (3) the behavioural carrying out of the action. Thus while inner dialogue helps define relationships between an individual and others at a given time, agency helps one to 'decide', 'choose' or 'construct' or 'enact' an identity at any given point. Giddens (1991:53) adds that one's identity "is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by an individual. Rather, it is *"the self as a reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography"*. Thus an individual's/agents' identity not only has continuity across space and time, but is reflexively interpreted by the individual/agent. These elements of SIT are appropriate in responding to the principal research question: **How do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL?**

Since a situated identity refers to the set of internal assertions made from a given perspective about an actor on the basis of his or her relationship to objects of orientation (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:288), the self, identity and the definition of the situation are critical for the analysis of social behaviour (Altheide, 2000:2). Thus work interactions, experiences and meanings that academics attribute to their work and its setting, as well as situational perceptions of themselves while at work, are expected to influence how they define themselves. Similarly, since situated identities are not static or passive, but emerge in and are particularised in the total sequence of events within a situation, they are 'made'. In this way academic identities are self-reflexive projects; something that individual academics continuously work and reflect on. That is, they create, maintain and revise the story of who they are, how they came to be and where they are currently (Gauntlett, 2002).

2.3.2.1 The Situation

Studies which concur with Alexander and Wiley's (1981) SIT show that identity formation is fundamental for social perceptions and interaction (MacKinnon, 1994:93). They also show that academic identities are sets of internal assertions made from a given perspective about an actor on the basis of his or her relationship to objects of orientation (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:288). As Alexander and Wiley (1981) state, identities exist within the context of the situation through the actions of participants towards them (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:286), therefore an approach to defining the situation requires a definition of the principles by which actors organise the relevant perspectives that define their relations to the environment (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:287). In this way, SIT views the definition of the situation simply as an individuals' self-determined behaviour and actions intended to define each of the possible paths of contemplated behaviour (Reynolds, 2003:65). Hence, people act towards things based on the perception of the realness of those things and how they understand their situation (Altheide, 2000:2). As MacKinnon (1994:62) states, people often develop identities basing themselves on processes

monitoring the situation, constraints in the current definition of the situation and the overall context of the social act. Thus study participants are expected to construct academic identities as they carry out their work at NUL; however, the kind of identity that they construct depends on *subjective interpretations* and *definitions of the work situation itself*. Hence, the construction of academic identities is not merely 'reactions' to the work setting, situations, or facts in and of themselves; rather, it is a response to 'real' forces shaping academics' conduct at work. Accordingly, if academics define work situations as 'real', then they are 'real' in their consequences (Reynolds, 2003:66).

Although symbolic interactionism tends to focus on the definition of the situation using time, place, and manner of action (Altheide, 2000:2), French, Rayner, Rees, Rumbles, Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2005:82) opine that individuals define situations differently, depending on their 'perceptions'. As such, perceptions are not only subjective but they also lack homogeneity. French et al. (2005:82) go on to state that the factors that contribute to perceptual differences among people include the characteristics of the perceiver, the setting and the perceived. Firstly, '*the perceiver*' relates to the sum of an individual's past experiences, needs or motives, personality, values and attitudes and these may all influence the perceptual process. These factors are called an individual's 'perceptual set'. For example, in the workplace a person with a strong achievement need tends to perceive a situation in terms of that need.

The second factor is *the setting*. It describes the physical, social and organisational context of the perceptual setting which can also influence the perceptual process. The term, '*the perceived*,' relates to the characteristics of what an individual (be it another person, object or event) perceives. Hence the perceived is also an important factor in the perceptual process. Therefore the definition of a situation is critical for constructing situated identities. It entails actors agreeing on identities that they will give each other and the roles that they will enact. In this way, people must reach a consensus on the type of person that they will treat each other as being (Delamater et al. 2015:148). That is, an individual "is" what others expect if he or she communicates the recognition of the situation.

Consequently, an individual's power is a critical element in identity construction, as it gives the individual the authority to define a situation for self and others. Accordingly others more or less accept the powerful person's or group's definition (Altheide, 2000:5). Even so, it is important to recognise that the individual's power and authority are both historical and contextual; they inform the actors' definitions and strategies for effective interaction. The situation is also more temporal than spatial, and usually involves more than just the 'now'. The context of other experiences and assumptions which actors bring in defining who they are (Altheide, 2000:5) is also important. In this way, identities that are important to individuals can drive them to behave in a manner that validates their identity (Delamater et al. 2015:130).

2.3.2.2 Social encounters

SIT views an individual as a reflexive social actor with a collection of situated identities derived from a constant negotiation and reciprocity with others through a reference processes. It states that individuals form identities through role taking; they perceive themselves in terms of others' reactions to them. As such, others' presence influences individuals to see a relationship between themselves and the environment (MacKinnon, 1994:93). Therefore during social encounters the construction of academic identities is influenced by: (1) how academics (as individuals) perceive themselves during situational relations with others and (2) the need for others to support their constructed identities in public settings (although they may reject them privately) in order to facilitate a smooth interaction (Delamater et al. 2015:148).

As such, the academics' situated self within the HE situation derives from the demands of the situation and make up the 'self' that people recognise in particular situations (Delamater et al. 2015:622). In this light, SIT conceives identity as the situational representation of the self and management of others' impressions (Robinson, 2013:18). It argues that the actors enter into a social setting with pre-existing identities and social characteristics such as age, gender and occupation as well as culturally established summaries of past events and actions (McKinnon, 1994:94). This element is expected to be found in the narratives of the construction of academic identities; that is, this study is expected to show how academics' existing self-concepts and socially derived characteristics influence the construction of academic identities. This would show that academic identities must be 'established and maintained as a prerequisite for social conduct' (Alexander & Lauderdale, 1977:225) since 'who one is' in social encounters defines how one is expected to act and how others treat him or her as the identity sets the pattern for status and relationships during social interactions (Alexander & Wiley, 2004: 274). As such, situated identities are not only necessary for initiating interaction but they are essential for planning and managing the progression of interaction (Alexander & Lauderdale, 1977:225).

SIT also describes aspects of the self that are activated in particular situations (Farmer & Van Dyne, 2010:503), therefore it follows that the status one claims may direct one's status and power within relationships and activity sequence (McKinnon, 1994:94). It further speaks of social action as coordinated group norms; that is individuals choose behavioural strategies based on other member's reference processes. Hence, SIT focuses on subjectivity as influencing people's behaviour and actions (Robinson, 2013:18). Moreover, SIT assumes that 'in the absence of any other criteria, normative expectations about conduct should be a function of the social desirability of alternatives' (Alexander & Wiley, 1981:276; MacKinnon, 1994:96). Hence situated activity is evaluative in nature; this is why actors will always choose the type of conduct which is more socially desirable based on knowledge of the implications of certain acts (MacKinnon, 1994:94). However, this depends on people holding similar

perspectives; that is, situated activities must meet a consensus standard (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:275). However, other conditions must also be met; people must agree that specific dimensions are relevant to an act. They must further agree on how to distinguish the act along each facet of the act. Secondly, people must agree on how actions are to be evaluated along relevant dimensions. Only when these conditions are met, can a situated activity be normatively structured (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:275). In this case, individuals must agree that particular behaviours are relevant to their actions and must agree on how to characterise their actions along different dimensions. As such, the situated identity perspective assumes that people must negotiate their own identities before an interaction can happen (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:274; Alexander & Lauderdale, 1977:225).

Hence Deaux (1993:6) and Fearon (1999:2) view identities as situational and state that they direct people to define their own identities depending on a shared understanding and meaning of the situation. Situational identities also allow people to know how to and how not to act, therefore they are culturally and historically specific. They also dictate which roles and identities are suitable or inconsistent in a given kind of situation. Moreover, they guide expectations and interpretations of people's own and others' behaviour in social interaction (Vryan et al. 2003:368); hence they allow individuals to negotiate and redefine their identities in the course of an interaction (Stone, 1962:93). Thus, situated identities establish where and what a person is in social terms; they position individuals and mould them into social objects by virtue of their participation or membership in social relations (Stone, 1962:93). These conceptualisations of situated identity highlight Bamberg's (2010:4) statement that identity has three characteristics: (1) it maintains a sense of 'sameness' across time in the face of constant change, (2) it represents a uniqueness of the person vis-à-vis others and (3) there is a constant negotiation between the self agency and the social structure (Bamberg, 2010:4).

2.3.2.3 Situated activity

In their attempt to define situated activity, Alexander and Wiley (1981) differentiate between human conduct and situated activity in the construction of situated identities. They argue that in 'conduct' others may not be actually (physically) present, yet the actor may remain unaware that he has taken the actual presence of others into account. However, in 'situated activity', an actor perceives particular others and consciously incorporates their perspectives into his orientation to conduct. Hence, 'conduct' becomes situated activity when it is anchored outside the self and constrained (Alexander & Wiley, 1981:273). That is, individuals find their place, familiarise and adjust themselves into positions where others are present while their situated activity represents their ability to incorporate others' perspectives into their conduct. This element of Alexander and Wiley's theory is expected to be helpful in showing how academics' narratives portray how others' views are incorporated into academics' overall self-concepts and mannerisms in the workplace. This would then confirm the view that academics' conduct becomes

a situated activity when it originates from outside the self, although it is constrained by presumed monitoring (Alexander & Wiley, 2004: 273). Alexander and Wiley (1981) recognise that most situations are socially defined and norms are continually imminent, hence they limit their investigation on situated activities to those that meet a 'consensus criterion'. That is, they believe that people must not only be in agreement about certain dimensions relevant to an activity, but they must also agree on how to characterise and evaluate that activity along each dimension. When this is complete, then an activity has a coherent normative structure (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:275). This is because one's actions are determined by one's identity; that is, since actors enter settings with portions of their identities and culturally formed summaries of previous events and actions already established, situated activity then becomes a continuous process of forming, modifying or terminating situated identities provided the conditions under which an identity is constructed (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:273).

Situated identities also fluctuate the by-products of a situated activity (Robinson, 2013:19). As Goffman (1961:97) states, one's actions inevitably express something about him or her which one and others can use to fashion an image of the individual. In this way, situated activity is an ongoing process of forming, confirming, changing and sometimes re-constructing situated identities (Alexander & Wiley, 2004: 274). Therefore, SIT states that the definition of the situation is often altered by events and the changing perspectives resultant from social interaction (MacKinnon, 1994:93). This element is expected to explain how the definition of the situation aids academics to either form or destroy academic identities. This situation would prove that academic identities are not possessed by or imposed on academics; nor are they located in externalised environmental structures. Rather academic identities define the relationships between the actor (academic) and the environment (work and its setting) at any given point. Even so, how academics view the social reality of their work and its setting is generated from the perspectives that are relevant to the events in a social field (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:274). In this way, academic identities are expected to typify academics' active and reflexive outlets of group concerns (Robinson, 2013:19). Hence it will be shown that academics as social actors prefer to construct identities in the situation when they are more socially desirable than others who are available (Alexander & Wiley; 1981:288); that is, when other alternative identities are available, normative expectations about conduct lead to one choosing socially desirable alternatives (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:276).

To conclude, Alexander and Wiley's (1981) SIT is expected to provide answers to the principal research question **'how do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL?'** by possibly showing that the construction of academic identities is fundamental for social perceptions and interaction (MacKinnon, 1994:93). Secondly, SIT is expected to show that the construction of academic identities is not merely 'reactions' to the work setting, situations or facts in and of themselves. Instead, academics respond to 'real' forces shaping their conduct because if they define those situations as 'real', then they are 'real' in their

consequences (Reynolds, 2003:66). Thirdly, SIT is expected to show that academic identities must be 'established and maintained as a prerequisite for social conduct' (Alexander & Lauderdale, 1977:225) since 'who one is' in social encounters defines how one is expected to act and how others treat him or her as identity sets the pattern for status and relationships during a social interaction (Alexander & Wiley, 2004: 274).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter began with the discussion of the myriad conceptualisations of identity where it was shown that the construction of identities is a continuous, reflexive and dialogic process. In exploring how academics construct identities, it will be useful to also determine whether these processes influence academic identities as sets of meanings that define who one is as an occupant of a particular role, a member of a particular group or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique individual. Against this background, the interactionist perspective is crucial in understanding identity issues among academics since it shows that the self is formed from the mind, interaction with others and people's own definitions and interpretations of situations. The two theoretical perspectives of identity SIT and IT further clarified the interactionist frame. They showed that identities are constructed in either 'the situation' or in 'social relations' respectively.

On the one hand, Alexander and Wiley's (1981) SIT views identity formation as the result of interaction; as such, identities represent the relationship between the individual and the other actors at a given time. It also contends that identities derive from the definition of the situation, social encounters and situated activity. Thus they are not static; but emerge in the total sequence of events within a situation and from 'who one is' in social encounters. Hence actors continually establish, confirm and modify identities to portray identities which are more socially desirable. On the other hand, IT views identity construction as a characteristic of the self which is reflexive and capable of categorising itself in ways that contrast it with other social categories. It then offers three distinct yet strongly related directions to theorising identities; firstly, Stryker's (1980) structural perspective argues that people may devise the role, social or person role identities and carry those into the many situations that they experience. Secondly, the Burke's (1980) cognitive emphasis views identities as reflexive and symbolic and as realised through a social interaction while McCall and Simmons' (1978) interactional emphasis views identities as idiosyncratic interpretations of cultural expectations tied to social positions structure which actors try to fulfil. Therefore the two theoretical frameworks show that the work situation and relations within HEIs shape academics' current self-images.

The next chapter presents the review of the relevant literature on academic identities.

CHAPTER THREE

ACADEMIC IDENTITY: IDENTIFICATION WITH NUL OR THE PROFESSION?

3.1 Introduction

Individuals basically have four identities; (1) social identities which differentiate or show similarities between people such as being a man, a woman, black or white (Swann & Bosson, 2008:448); (2) personal identities which denote individual uniqueness and own set of characteristics like names, personal histories and aspects of personality that define an individual as unique such as being intelligent or athletic (Swann & Bosson, 2008:448; Vryan et al. 2003:371); (3) primary identities such as gender, kinship, ethnic identities which are ascribed at birth and (4) secondary identities which are acquired during secondary socialisation processes such as accountant, teacher, and hairdresser (Lawson, Jones & Moores, 2000:1).

Interest in identity is facilitated by an ever increasing interest in the practices and strategies used in its formation, especially in the agency that actors exercise in constructing them (Brown, 2014:23; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010:135). Thus, different sociologists have attempted to explain identity meteoritic rise (Brown, 2014:22). For example, Lasch (1979) attributes it to the modern 'narcissistic culture', Baumeister (1986) to the disappearance of traditional means of self-definition such as gender or social rank and Rose (1991) to the increased attention on identity as an indicator for individual autonomy. Bauman (2000) attributes it to the pressure that social change exerts on individuals to construct 'liquidly modern' selves; that is, significant changes overtime in behaviour patterns have transitioned individuals from 'pilgrims' in search of deeper meaning of who they are, to 'tourists' in search of multiple but fleeting social experiences.

Therefore for sociologists identity is a kind of interface or a conceptual bridge between the individual and society (Brown, 2014:23) which depicts various identifications and meanings that an individual has with certain social formations (Lawson & Garrod, 2001:116) or with parts of the self that are composed of meanings that are attached to the roles that one plays in modern-day life (Stryker & Burke, 2000:284). However, since identity neither imprisons nor detaches people from their social and symbolic universes (Brown, 2014:20), this chapter will not only seek to understand academic identity as a phenomenon but it will also explore the ways in which individuals interact with each other in a social setting as they construct their identities (King & Billot, 2016:158).

3.2 Academic Identities as ‘Hybrids’

Developing an identity is an ever-lasting human quest (Badley, 2016:377); thus identity is a dynamic construct which is continually formed and reformed (Lieff et al. 2012:208). There is an emergent consensus in sociology that identity refers to the meanings that individuals attach reflexively to themselves; these meanings are developed and sustained by individuals through processes of social interaction as they seek to address the question ‘*who am I?*’ (Brown, 2014:23). For example, Badley (2016:377) states that academics often worry about the identities which they compose for their many selves such as ‘what kind of researcher should I be?’ or ‘what research club shall I join?’ As such academics are not merely passive recipients of identities provided to them by social entities; rather, they are capable of recognising the identity implications and demands of organisations, groups and other social entities. Thus, they can respond to identity pressures as well as proactively initiate identity dynamics (Kreiner et al., 2006:1333).

Similar to identity, academic identity lacks exactness in terms of description, thus it cannot be summed up in a few sentences. Even so, the literature reveals two main ways of viewing academic identity; firstly, as a source of ‘*meaning*’ for academics and, secondly as ‘*identification*’ with the university or profession. Researchers, such as Feather (2010:189), who subscribe to the former, view academic identity as a representation of an individual’s inner being, his or her values, beliefs and attitudes. Thus academic identities are a manifestation of numerous complex experiences and representations of a culture or defining communities that a person is based in (2010:189). Vandeyar (2010:916) concurs, stating that academic identities are interwoven into the essence of being for the academic since they reflect the life histories and encompass individual values and commitments. Thus academic identities, as meaning, represent symbolic identification of the purpose of academics’ actions at work (Lea & Stierer, 2011:610).

Conversely, those researchers such as Winter (2009:122) who view academic identity as identification, argue that academic identity is the extent to which academics define themselves primarily in terms of the university (institutionally) or as members of a profession. King and Billot (2016:158) also add that academic identities derive from one’s institution, discipline and personal interpretations of what an academic should be like, while Musolf (2003:8) states that academic identities develop from the set of meanings that define academics in terms of their roles, statuses, membership in disciplinary communities and the characteristics that make them unique individuals. Harris (2005) and Clarke et al. (2013:7) view academics as teachers, scholars, and specialists in HE; therefore, they view academic identities as a trinity of research, teaching and scholarly activities that are subject or discipline-based. Even so, there are some researchers who view academic identities as the sum of meanings and identification with the university or profession. That is, they argue that academic identities only become

such once they have been internalised and meanings constructed around their internalisation. However, they contend that identities are stronger sources of meaning than work roles because of the process of self-construction and individuation that they provide. Thus while work roles organise functions, while identities organise meanings (Lea & Stierer, 2011:610). For example, Van Winkel, Van der Rijst, Poell & Driel (2017:2) state that in HE academic roles are associated with two distinctive responsibilities; research and teaching. These create 'a working understanding of academic' derived from four forms of scholarship: (1) discovery (research), (2) integration (multi-disciplinary research), (3) application (valorization) and (4) teaching (based in disciplinary developments). From this, they define academics as those who are employed in HE, "related to one or more of those forms of scholarship" (Van Winkel et al., 2017:2).

This view exemplifies the perception of academic identities as pertaining to the particular 'situation' that academics work in; therefore academic identities as situated and descriptive of *who* academics are in relation to others in the situation (Delamater et al. 2015:148). Consequently they are not a fixed property, but are part of the "lived complexity of a person's project and their ways of being in those sites which are constituted as being part of the academic" (Clegg, 2008:329). For this study, the above-mentioned definitions of academic identity specify its different aspects or origins. However, it is clear from the above definitions that many authors find it difficult to define academic identities (Van Winkel et al., 2017:2; Feather, 2010:190).

Even so, three things are clear about the definitions of academic identity; (1) it is an attempt to make sense of 'who' one is by the way he or she lives his or her daily work life (King & Billot, 2015:834; Wenger, 1998:149); (2) it is influenced by factors within personal, relational and contextual domains (Lieff et al. 2012:208); (3) it is the negotiation of the tension between the structure, communities and the academic's own position (Kreiner et al. 2006:1033; Bamberg, 2010:4; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010:135; Brown, 2014:23; McAlpine et al., 2014:954). Research supports the above-mentioned views. For example, Vandeyar (2010) found that academics are likely to develop multiple academic identities, comprising personal attributes, membership in social groups and various work roles. Thus it is clear from the above definitions that academics are the producers and product, influencers and the influenced of their identities.

It is for this reason that Quigley (2011:21) opines that any conceptualisation of academic identity should seek to unravel notions of academic ontology and epistemology or how academics *come to be* and how they *come to know* that they are academics. Sociologically, critical realism states that epistemologies depict self-knowledge, based on experience and not on surface appearances. Conversely, ontologies depict reality or how things come to exist. As such, individuals have innate capacities to (re)act in certain way and to be both an influence and an influencer in social situations which further influence how they

understand themselves (Jackson & Hogg, 2010:152-153). For example, research by Hallett (2010) found that teaching professionals in educational institutions experienced an epistemic identity crisis (displacement of meaning, certainty and expectations) when institutional myths and organisational practices like accountability (macro) and autonomy (micro) that were once loosely connected became tightly linked in their work. Academic identities as epistemologies, therefore, refer to the fact that only academics have the experiential knowledge of what being an academic feels like while as an ontology, their identities depict the dual influence of the structure (social relations within the university) and agency (the individual freedom to choose). The interactionist perspective has also shown that individuals continually construct their identities depending on the situation and relations that they participate in. Hence, people construct identities to sustain that sense of meaningfulness (Demerath, 2006:492).

From the point of view of this study, academic identities are academics' subjectively construed understandings of who they are (Brown, 2014:21). As such, only academics who experience work in their respective universities know what working in those universities really 'feels' like while those who are not can only opine what things are like (Mills & Gitlin, 2000:3-4). It is not surprising then that Quigley states that academic identities are not only complex but they are also composed of various competing influences which make them difficult to define so that they may best be conceptualised as 'shifting targets which differ for each individual academic' (2011:21).

The notion of academic identities as '*hybrids*,' therefore, reflects the various perceptions and conceptualisations of academic identities. It also resonates Wenger's (1998) concept of *identity as nexus of multimembership*; that is, identity derives from negotiating meanings of experience of membership in social communities. Hence an identity connects the 'social' and the 'individual' so that each can be referred to the other (Wenger, 1998:145). For Wenger this essentially involves constructing identities derived from the different meanings of multimembership into one nexus (1998, 159-160) or constructing different aspects of themselves such that they are simultaneously one and multiple.

Although it has been established that it is difficult to ascertain what academic identity means, the above discussion offers possible ways of understanding it.

3.3 Constituencies of academic identities

Universities are complex and distinct organisations where different constructions of 'academic' coexist (Fitzmaurice, 2013:613). CoP are critical in this regard for it is here that people who share a passion or concern for something, interact regularly and learn how to do their craft better (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1). Thus CoP within HE are the chief sources of identity and skills for academics; they house assumptions about what is to be learned, task performance, patterns of publication, professional

interaction as well as social and political status (Becher, 1989 cited in Clarke et al., 2013:7; Clarke, Kenny & Loxley, 2015:23). Vandeyar (2010:916) also adds that the university (as an all-encompassing body) also houses different communities. It is these communities which influence the make-up of academic identities (Vandeyar, 2010:915). Contained in the definition of communities within the university are the notions of relationships, environment, expectations and responsibilities (Jongbloed, Enders & Salerno, 2008:305). Further, within the university, there are two types of communities that directly influence the construction of academic identities; the internal academic community and the external academic community (Vandeyar, 2010:916). According to Kreiner et al. (2006:1333) this implies that academic identities are 'constructed and negotiated at the interface of individual and organisational identities'. Thus, as individuals engage aspects of their identity in interactions and situations, their personal and organisational boundaries are always subject to re-negotiation (Hollensbe et al. 2006:1331).

3.3.1 The internal academic communities

In the academic setting, the work tasks fall into three main areas: the classroom environment, the site environment and the school setting (Yeagley, 2008:16). Thus the internal academic community includes students and staff (community of scholars), administration and management (Jongbloed et al., 2008:305). The internal academic community is also essentially comprised of different CoP which are "formed by people engaged in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour" (Wenger, 2012:1). Therefore CoP have three basic dimensions central for distinguishing them from other social structures. These include; (1) the domain of knowledge, (2) the community of people who care about the domain and (3) the shared practice that they create (Wenger, 2012:2; Snyder & Wenger, 2010:110; Ruuska & Vartiainen, 2003:171). All these three elements reflect the fundamentally social and contextual nature of identity formation. They also reflect three different but interconnected types of academic identities, namely; the academic as a distinctive individual, the academic as an embedded individual and the academic as a professional (Vandeyar, 2010:916).

3.3.1.1 The domain: Distinctive academic identities

The domain of knowledge is the first level of CoP (Ruuska & Vartiainen, 2003:171). It focuses on a specific domain which defines its identity and what it cares about; that is, the passion members have for their domain become a deep part of their *person* identity and a means to express what their life's work is all about (Snyder & Wenger, 2010:110). Besides being passionate about their domain, members ensure that they keep their interaction within the domain continuous (Ruuska & Vartiainen, 2003:172). Thus the domain defines the key issues in the community; it is informed by member's shared competence, interest and commitment. The domain also represents a joint enterprise, a sense of

accountability as well as a shared understanding and passion for the domain (Ruuska & Vartiainen, 2003:172). According to Henkel (2000) it is within the domain where distinctive academic identities exist. They depict the academic as a 'distinctive individual', who has a unique history, a chosen moral and conceptual framework and who is identified within a defined community or institution by the goods that he or she has achieved. This view is exemplified in the study's principal research question: **How do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL?** Thus distinctive academic identities are personal and reveal the life history of the academic; hence they are indivisibly intertwined into the very essence of the being of the academic (Vandeyar, 2010:916). Distinctive academic identities also reflect who one is, as well as their commitments and values. James (2006:7) adds that it is within the domain where identities are seen as 'learning trajectories;' that is, the distinctive academic identity integrates the past and the future in the negotiation of the present (Wenger 1998:74).

Wenger's (1998) concept '*practice as connection*' explains how academic domains influence distinctive academic identities. Here Wenger (1998:113) opines that practice within a domain is its own boundary since participants not only form close relationships and develop idiosyncratic ways of engaging with one another, but they also have a detailed and complex understanding of their enterprise as they define it (which outsiders may not share). Members of domains may also have extensive repertoires of behaviours which outsiders may not have access to. Wenger's statements show that academic identities constructed in the domains of knowledge are distinctive because only members of those domains have a detailed understanding and interpretations of membership. As such, academics from different academic domains were expected to have distinctive identities, based on their disciplines. Their academic identities are also expected to be related to the traditional academic calling⁴ and the kind of work tasks and working conditions that academics are engaged in.

Generally, universities have core values such as academic freedom, intellectual honesty, respect for diversity and critical thinking (Harland & Pickering, 2011:64). To illustrate, D'Arms (1993:34-35) states that now and in the future HE will continue to have the following values; firstly, it will remain commitment to providing rigorous specialised training and ensuring broad and comprehensive education. Secondly, it will continue to be committed to improving access and assuring broad and comprehensive education to all as well as promoting intellectual originality and being committed to research and scholarship. Lastly, HE will forever remain committed to creating communities of learning and a mastery of disciplines. Clarke et al. (2013:7) share a similar view. For them, the academic profession possesses common values across disciplinary and institutional boundaries. These include "academic freedom, the

⁴ Hakala (2009) states that the traditional understanding of academic identity is related to academics' moral frameworks; thus academic identity is related to ideas of truth, autonomy, academic calling and passion for knowledge.

community of scholars, scrutiny of accepted knowledge, truth seeking, collegial governance, individual autonomy and service to society through the production of knowledge, the transmission of culture and education of the young". For example, NUL values honesty, integrity, professionalism, excellent customer care, respect, tolerance, transparency and accountability in interactions between and among staff, colleagues, students and others. It also values innovativeness, resourcefulness collaborations, academic freedom and excellence (National University of Lesotho, 2015:4). Therefore, traditional academic values and ideals persist in HE (Ylijoki & Ursin, 2013:1136).

Distinctive academic identities are also premised on beliefs, norms and values which are enshrined in discipline-based work structures that govern the content and process of academic work. These include, discipline scholarship, intellectual curiosity, shared practice, accountability to peers and professional autonomy. Similarly, self-regulation of own work behaviour, academic professionalism and professional training are central to distinctive academic identities. They represent the '*cherished ideals*' of academia and are defended rigorously by academics as they are often central to their professional autonomy, status and identity (Winter, 2009:123).

For Harland and Pickering (2011:64) the cherished ideals of academic all over the world include core values such as academic freedom, intellectual honesty, respect for diversity and critical thinking (Harland & Pickering, 2011:64). Adams (2000:66) adds that historically academics have had freedom in deciding on taught content. As professionals, they enjoy freedom not only in deciding how to conduct their work but also in demonstrating expertise within their discipline. Moreover, they are committed to the discovery, advancement and dissemination of the knowledge of their discipline as well as adherence to the ethics and standards of the discipline.

However, Taylor (1989:27) contends that academic identities are constructed when academics have proper knowledge of 'who' they are and their 'moral standpoint'; that is, one's identity is defined by his/her values. James (2006:7) concurs and adds that individuals' identities are indivisibly linked with who they are as individuals, their disciplinary commitments and values.

For that reason, values have been proclaimed as the requisite link between identity and orientation; hence for individuals to know who they are, they need to be oriented in a moral space, where they can decide what is worth doing and what is not as well as what has meaning or is trivial (Taylor, 1989:28). Therefore based on their values, individuals develop self-affirming images to help them appear favourably in the eyes of the people whom they interact with (Taylor, 1989:33).

3.3.1.2 The community: Embedded academic identities

The second element in CoP is the community itself and the quality of relationships that bind members within it (Snyder & Wenger, 2010:110). That is, when individuals enter CoP, they gradually adopt its practices, identity and central practices of group membership (Hoadley, 2012:291). Hence, community membership produces an identity; the person is seen as a meaning-making entity and the social world as a resource for constituting an identity. The feeling of community is also essential for members as it provides them with a strong foundation for learning and collaboration among diverse members (Snyder & Wenger, 2010:110). As such, by interacting with each other regularly, individuals adopt identities and learn how to do their work better, based on collective concerns, beliefs and values (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1).

Within the community, the academic is an embedded individual (Henkel 2000); that is, he or she is a member of a community and institution that is defined by its own languages, conceptual structures, histories, traditions, myths, values, practices and achieved goods. In this context, the way in which an academic fulfils his or her role is strongly determined by the norms of the community and or institution that he or she is part of. Thus the experiences and behaviour of an academic within the community is social; it reflects the contexts in which academics live. In this regard, Maclure (1993:314) states that the process of academic identity construction is a self-reflexive endeavour, inclusive of a network of personal concerns, values and aspirations against which events are judged and decisions are made'.

A similar view is held by Buch (1999:52) who states that discipline-based cultures in HE form the basis of academic identity as expertise and assumptions about what is to be known and how tasks to be performed, standards for effective performance, patterns of publication, professional interaction and social and political status are found within them (Becher, 1989 cited in Clarke & Drennan, 2013:7). Even so, it is of import to recognise that when academics enter the academic world and academic occupational roles they bring with them biographical and cultural baggage; hence their experiences of work and its setting are influenced by the baggage that they bring with them to the university and the factors inherent in the institutional context. Thus it can be said that academic identities are understood through the practices that academics engage in; consequently, they are not merely defined by the individual, but by the way in which he or she is perceived as being a full member of a community (Vandeyar, 2010:917).

Wenger's (1998) concept '*identities as negotiated experience*' explains how community membership influences academic identities. That is, people define who they are through the way in which they experience themselves through participation as well as through the ways in which they and others reify themselves (Wenger, 1998:149). Therefore, Wenger contends that an individual negotiates meaning

by virtue of being a member of a community; that is, negotiation of meaning is facilitated by membership in a community which embodies the convergence of participation and reification (Wenger, 1998:55). This view is exemplified in the study's first subsidiary question: **How do reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff?**

Similar to Hakala (2009), this question aims to find out how academics use communal beliefs and values to reflexively create comparisons and contrasts of how an academic should behave and then position themselves in relation to them. Research suggests that academic identities are negotiated and reasserted as academic staff members encounter new expectations and pressures in their work environments (Leisyte & Dee, 2012:168). This is because academics are embedded individuals; as such, they are guided by the norms of the community and institution that they inhabit. Thus the emergence of embedded or group academic identity is both social and reflexive. It involves judging and making decisions based on a network of personal concerns, values and aspirations (Vandeyar, 2010:917).

In his book *Sources of The Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Taylor (1989) states that the full definition of someone's identity not only entails his moral standing but also his or her reference to a defining community (Taylor, 1989:36). Thus an identity is not a *thing*, but it is a form of identification and connection with and to particular people, communities and ideals. As such, the question, "who am I?" is about what and to whom a person feels importantly connected (Weir, 2013:29). For example, the statement that defining communities are critical in the construction of academic identities in universities (James, 2006; Henkel, 2005), confirms Taylor's (1989:35) view that it is impossible to describe the self without reference to those around it.

In universities, defining communities may be operationalised as networks of affect-laden relations within disciplinary communities which have recognisable identities and cultural attributes that create a sense of belonging to academic tribes (Becher & Trowler, 2001:4). As such, academic identities within HEIs are *social* identities. Similarly, academic identities are constructed within the context of social institutions and relations (Henkel, 2005:156). However, Patariaia, Margaryan, Falconer and Littlejohn (2015:340) argue that networks are not only about getting things done but they are also about community, social circles, as well as the social support that individuals gain access to through such communities.

As a group, academics are bearers of community traditions; as such, *who* they are is inherited and historical. They find themselves as part of the history of the university, whether they like it or not. Besides this, academics are products of the cultural practices found within defining communities in the university which provide the cultural symbols (language, myths, values and beliefs) which academics use to

understand themselves and to interpret the university social world (Henkel, 2005:157). Taylor (1989) also avers that identity is the result of being embedded in communities whereby identifying with particular traditions, groups, or ideological commitments constitutes people's identities. As such, human participation in social relations of recognition and misrecognition are constituted through background ontologies, relations of meaning and webs of interaction (Weir, 2013:29).

It is of import to mention here that disciplinary communities require the commitment of individuals to shared values, norms, meanings and identity. They also require members to lattice and reinforce one another often. Hence, they comprise persons acting as free agents and collectives that have identities and purposes of their own although they can act as a unit. Even so, disciplinary communities and academic tribes are anti-individualistic; they command centripetal forces that encourage member's commitments, energies, time and resources for what the collective endorses as normative and valuable (Etzioni, 2005:5). Hence the development of an academic identity hinges on obligations to others in the community as well as individual notions of dignity, meaningfulness, respect and self-esteem (Henkel, 2005:157).

Discipline-based cultures within HE are also cited as the primary sources of identity and skills for academics for it is within these disciplinary communities that assumptions about what is to be learned, task performance, patterns of publication, professional interaction as well as social and political status within the community are to be found. Vitally, disciplinary communities and academic tribes provide individuals with a *language* which they use to understand themselves as individuals and to interpret their social environment (Henkel, 2005: 157).

Since there is no way in which the self can develop without individuals being initiated into language, individuals define who they are by speaking from a myriad of social statuses and functions, values and defining relations (Taylor, 1989:35). Hence, communities with their shared language and meanings, permit individuals to assume the role of the other, engage in social interaction and reflect upon oneself as an object and thereby develop an identity (Stets & Burke, 2009:1). This essentially implies that individuals are socialised into their culture. Through these conversations, they develop ideas, experiences and deeply held values and beliefs of the community (Henkel, 2005:157). Thus, the development of academic identities is viewed as a function of the academics' disciplinary community membership grounded in interaction between individuals and two key communities, the academic discipline and the HEI (Quigley, 2011:23).

Cameron, Dutton and Quinn (2003:313) also add that academic identities develop when individuals find congruence between their work roles and their membership to disciplinary groups at work, as these will lead to a sense of identity and purpose (meaningfulness). Academic identities are therefore relational,

not independent; they are sociocultural and emerge and circulate in local contexts of interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005:588). Academics therefore acquire social meaning in relation to other available identity positions and social actors such as colleagues and students (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005:588). Research corroborates this view; Becher and Trowler (2001) found that disciplinary cultures had recognisable identities and cultural attributes which created a sense of belonging in academic tribes. Henkel (2000) found that identity for academics emanated from both the department and discipline while Malcolm and Zukas (2000) found that academics constructed their identities as part of their local and national academic communities (James, 2006:4).

3.3.1.3 The practice: Professional academic identities

Academic identities are first and foremost work-related identities; that is, they derive from and are shaped by work, for it is through work that people become social beings. As such, work 'forms' people. It not only gives them a focus, but it also gives them a means for personal expression and personal definition. In this way, work becomes one of the primary means by which adults find their identity and form their character; that is, *where* people work, *how* they work, *what* they do at work and the general ethos and culture of the workplace ineradicably mark people for life (Gini, 1998:708). Whereas an occupation is an activity, work, function or job that makes up the main source of an individual's livelihood, a profession is a more or less specialised, well paid and prestigious occupation (Monteiro, 2015:47). Similarly, academic occupations are principally professional occupations while academics as professionals are individuals who are qualified and legally entitled to pursue academic professions (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008:258).

Professional identity is defined as "one's professional self-concept, based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences" (Slay & Smith, 2011:86). Robson (1998:586) views it as "the perception of oneself as a professional and it is closely related to the knowledge and skills one has, the work one does and the work-related significant others or the reference group". Therefore professional identities derive from a profession; they influence self-definition and shape how others think about an individual. Thus professional identity can be thought of as the constellation of attributes, beliefs and values that people use to define themselves in specialised, skill- and education-based occupations or vocations (Slay & Smith, 2011:87).

Research into the construction of professional identities also cites family, cultural values, personal experiences and self-reflection on own identity as some of the factors which influence the construction of professional identities (Slay & Smith, 2011). This view is exemplified in the study's second subsidiary question: **How do descriptions of the (mis)alignment between work roles, expectations and individual values influence meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics' professional self-**

concepts? The second subsidiary question is important, given the statement that professional identities shape behaviour and are critical in the formation of job attitudes. They also play an integral role in the wellbeing and productivity of academic staff (Caza & Creary, 2016:6; Clarke et al. 2013:9; Lieff et al. 2012:208). For academics, professional identities are constructed within CoPs and the profession itself (Pifer & Baker, 2014:118).

Wenger (1998:51) defines the practice as a process in which people experience the social world and their engagement in it as being meaningful. Practice then is about meaning as an experience of everyday life. For Wenger, there is a deep connection between identity and practice, since a practice requires a community whose members engage and acknowledge each other as participants (1998:149). Wenger also characterises participation as having three dimensions: firstly, members share an understanding of the domain. This not only improves mutual engagement and builds trust between members but it also allows the discussion of issues pertaining to the practice (1998:149). Secondly, practice in a community is a joint enterprise which keeps the COP together and builds a sense of accountability to a body of knowledge. Thirdly, the community members develop a shared repertoire, inclusive of routines, words, tools and stories within the practice (Ruuska & Vartiainen, 2003:172).

Academics' professional identity is also work-related and linked to economic activities, It does not focus on who academics *are currently*; instead it focuses on who they aspire *to be* in the future (Cohen-Scali, 2003:239; Clarke et al. 2013:9). Hence professional identities are related to job satisfaction and loyalty to the institution. They arise membership in communities with own histories, traditions, myths, values and practices (Johnson, Morgeson, Ilgen, Meyer & Lloyd, 2006: 498; Clarke et al. 2013:8). Professional identities are also situated and play an integral role in their wellbeing and productivity of academics (Lieff et al. 2012:208). For Caza and Creary (2016:6) professional identities provide behavioural guidance in the workplace; they shape behaviour and are critical in the formation of professional self-concepts within the workplace. Therefore examining the impact of work experiences on professional identity construction is important because work experiences within contemporary institutions can be different for academics as professionals, as individuals and as members of discipline-based communities. Guzman-Valenzuela and Barnett (2013:1) opine that academic professions are trajectories; they are essentially an interplay between the institution as a structure (seeking to preserve and advance itself as an organisation) and academics as agents (seeking to fulfill their own self-realisation).

Thus, although academic professions shape and restrict academic identities depending on the type of university, academics are still free to pursue their academic professions or not. This view is exemplified in the study's third subsidiary question: **How do internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influence academic identity trajectories?** Professional identities are

therefore key in the way in which academics assign meanings to themselves; hence they help academics to claim purpose and meaning from their work. They also help professionals to see how they contribute to society (Caza & Creary, 2016:6).

As professionals, academics are perceived to combine their individual and social identities into their professional or *role* identities. However, they often experience tension arising from the institutional social context when they attempt to develop identities as professionals (Vandeyar, 2010:917). The practice then is a source of coherence in the community (Ruuska & Vartiainen, 2003:171). Even so, each community develops its practice by sharing and developing the knowledge of practitioners in its domain; these include its repertoire of tools, frameworks, methods and stories (Snyder & Wenger, 2010:110). The experience of meaning is produced by a continued interaction and engagement in practice because people produce meanings that negotiate anew the events which they were part of in the past through a continued interaction with others (Wenger, 1998:52-53).

3.3.2 The external academic communities

The external academic community comprises research communities, alumni, business, social movements, governments and professional associations (Jongbloed et al., 2008:305). An individual's academic identity, the institution, the discipline and the world outside the university can be seen as separate, but in actual fact they are linked. They give each other support through negotiation and exchange (Vandeyar, 2010:917). This sentiment is supported by Harre (1998) who states that an individual's identity is actually a series of "selves" which the individual shifts between, depending upon the space that they find themselves in. Thus an individual who shifts between selves suggests the ability for an identity to be flexible and more complex than a set and bounded entity.

3.3.2.1 New managerialism paradigms

Institutions are difficult to define; they are commonly associated with physical buildings or organisational settings such as universities. They are also bound up with power and are often perceived as serving the interests of powerful groups. As such, institutions are socially legitimised expertise combined with the authority to implement it. This suggests that institutions need not have material locations (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006:88). In this way, institutions are fundamentally phenomenological constructs; their existence relies on the degree to which a community of actors adopts shared sets of beliefs and consistently behaves in accordance with them. However, overtime these institutional core beliefs become typified and taken-for-granted, hence they become externalised. As a result, institutions become reified (take a life of their own) and appear distant and separate from the individuals who created and habitually reproduce them (Bevort & Suddaby, 2016:18-19).

Managerialism within institutions is an increasingly predominant feature of modern-day life; its influence far exceeds the institutional setting into the economic, social, cultural and political spheres of society. In fact, it is said to be so pervasive that it has infiltrated every eventuality of human existence (Shepherd, 2017:1). Similarly, in HE the emergence of managerialist ideology originating from the private and or corporate sector, is said to have seeped into every “nook and cranny” of university life (Davis, Van Rensburg & Venter, 2016:1480; Deem, Hillyard & Reed 2007:27). The old universities filled with long traditions based on being governed on collegiate bases have now been filled by academics on a rotating fixed term (Hamlin & Patel, 2017:293). In fact, presently all layers of management in HEIs are seen as having an important role in ensuring the productivity, efficiency, sustainability and competitiveness of their institutions (Davis et al., 2016:1481).

Universities are increasingly being held accountable for the quality of their performance, due to the influences of new public management and managerialism (Teelken, 2012:274). They have moved to a much more corporate style of management similar to the style characterising non-university institutions. Further, the management of universities is no longer confined to senior management, but has cascaded downwards such that mid-level academic managers now have increased responsibilities to manage their departments (Hamlin & Patel, 2017:293). Thus, universities are no longer viewed as ivory towers of intellectual pursuits and truthful thoughts but rather as enterprises driven by selfish individuals out to capture as much money and influence as possible (Powell & Owen-Smith 1998: 267).

Gordon and Whitchurch (2010) contend that managerialism in the HE context has six main features: (1) a greater separation of academic work and management activities; (2) increased control and regulation of academic work by managers; (3) perceived shift in authority from academics to managers and a consequent weakening of the professional status of academics; (4) an ethos of enterprise and emphasis on income generation; (5) government policy focused on universities meeting socio-economic needs and (6) more market orientation, with increased competition for resources. Whilst the first three features have been closely related to the ideological tenets of managerialism (such as the adoption of a more business-like approach and performance management), the remaining three arguably have their roots in neoliberalism such as central regulation, adoption of an entrepreneurial culture, emphasis on service quality and commodification of services (Shepherd, 2017:2).

Therefore, Deem et al. (2007: 9) combine managerialism and neoliberalism into ‘neoliberal managerialism’ which they identify as a variant of the ‘new managerialism’ that has permeated universities. For example, Teelken (207:271) states that due to budget constraints, accountability for quality, massification and decentralisation, universities in the United Kingdom (UK), Netherlands and Sweden have adopted organisational strategies, management instruments and values that are commonly found in the private sector.

HEIs in many countries are also currently experiencing significant changes in how they are organised and managed (Hamlin & Patel, 2017:292). In fact, the development of strategic plans, mission statements, objectives and performance indicators within universities are examples of the growth of managerialism in the academic sector (Lomas, 2007:32). For example, Goal Five of NUL's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan states that NUL aims to be 'an effectively led and well-managed university providing excellent service' (NUL, 2016:23). This highlights Salter and Tapper's (2002) view that universities are now businesses that market themselves in order to compete in the worldwide HE market. The objectives of Goal Five are to develop effective academic governance systems, to institutionalise sound corporate governance, to improve the quality of financial reporting, to strengthen marketing strategies, to develop NUL brand, to enhance communication strategies and to improve ICT governance and planning.

To achieve these objectives, NUL aims to re-organise its managerial structures and systems in both the academic, administrative and support domains. It also aims to re-energise them in line with the increasing competitive global, regional and local playing field. However, NUL aims to accomplish Goal Five and its objectives without shedding collegiality as a central defining feature of the university. Instead, it seeks to re-centre performing and accountable leadership equipped with appropriate skills and appropriate authority (NUL, 2016:23). This proves Lomas' (2007:32) statement that "universities are now businesses, many of whom market themselves in order to compete in the worldwide higher education market".

Research has been directed at understanding the impact of new managerialism paradigms on HEIs and academic identities. For example, Deem, Hillyard, and Reed (2007) investigated how a growing target culture changed the work of academics, as universities have transformed from 'communities of scholars' to 'workplaces'. Santiago, Carvalho and Cardoso (2015) investigated academics' perceptions on the changes in HEIs governance and management among one thousand three hundred and twenty academics from HEIs in Portugal. Their study showed that academics still held their control over some of the main conditions shaping the division and management of academic work and their own careers. However, respondents considered decisions related to the evaluation of research as being mostly influenced by government and external stakeholders while decisions on budget priorities and the selection of key administrators as being mainly influenced by the top institutional managers.

In a similar research, Teelken (2012) investigated how academics perceive managerial changes in ten universities in the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK, and whether the changes were considered to have a positive or a negative effect on the quality of research and teaching among a sample of forty-eight academics who held positions as administrative officers, PhD students, lecturers, senior lecturers, professors, deans and vice-chancellors. The findings revealed that respondents believed research had become increasingly assessed, particularly through the measurement of performance and the ranking

of researchers. They also agreed that a greater emphasis is being placed on quality care and quality assessment. Some expressed concern over current evaluation systems which their universities used; they viewed them as subjective and reduced to scores, therefore they were viewed as inappropriate for evaluating the quality of HE. Respondents also showed a clear dislike of the growing administration, the increasing competition for research funding, the obligation to fill in time-consuming grant applications and the heavier workloads.

3.3.2.2 Changing workplaces

In the developing world, academics are in an unenviable position; at the bottom of a world system of unequal relationships. Their situation is further complicated by the fact that they often have mixed qualifications, resulting in a select number of qualified professors and PhD holders. This not only results in small numbers of skilled and experienced academics but it raises barriers particularly in their recruitment and retention (Portnoi, 2009:189). In a book titled "*The Changing Academic Workplace: Comparative Perspectives*", Altbach (2000:14) states that declining government funding, managerialism and increased demands for accountability have not only become the 'vocabulary of academic life', but they have had adverse effects in the working conditions of academic staff in the form of increased class sizes and inadequate and/or deteriorating facilities.

Portnoi (2009:188) also adds that massification of HE had led to a crisis in the academic profession that has negatively affected the quality of teaching, research and scholarship. On top of this, academics are increasingly being asked to produce and apply knowledge aimed at solving social problems rather than for the pursuit of knowledge itself. Gardner and Wiley (2016:2) further state that academics experience several challenges within the university such as "decreased government funding, pressure to generate new income, balancing work and family life, continuous change, dealing with slow and unresponsive administrative processes and increased government reporting and scrutiny". These challenges emanating from the disjunction between the 'imagined' academic life and the 'reality' that is experienced make academic life difficult (King & Billot, 2016:158).

Today, academics find themselves working alongside colleagues whose roles exceed their job descriptions; these so called 'blended' or 'third space' professionals are typically non-academic staff whose work crosses the traditional boundary between the academic and administrative functions of the university. This suggests that 'pure' academic voices are increasingly becoming diluted while non-academic staff is increasingly setting the tone for HEIs (Robinson, 2016:18). HE systems are also employing greater numbers of part-time or fixed-contract academics; this has led to casual academic labourers or 'just-in-time knowledge workers' and a split in academic identities (Portnoi, 2009:188-189). Further, academics are being asked to develop a range of 'unrelated and non-complementary skills'.

They are expected to add community service and research consultancies to their working roles. Academics research is also increasingly dedicated to community partnerships and external funding agencies rather than their own professional area of learning and teaching. The end result of this is that academics often find themselves working for somebody else's agenda (Robinson, 2016:18-19).

In order to have a full comprehension on the impact of external factors on academic identity, it is important to consider the complex changes that universities are currently undergoing. According to Lomas and Lygo-Baker (2006) these changes are brought about by the need for HEIs to respond to a range of developments in economics (such as the reduction in public spending), politics (such as the pressure to increase student places) and technological advances (such as new and faster methods of communication). For example, greater demands are now placed on HEIs to deliver more with fewer resources (Feather, 2017:706). Academics also recognise the requirement to collaborate with external partners and act entrepreneurially (Kearney & Maxwell, 2015:3).

The increasingly business-orientated direction of the HE sector is also reflected by pressure on academic staff to bring their own constructions of academic identity in line with the corporate identity distinct from a 'collegium of academics' (Gale, 2011: 216). For example, Portnoi (2009:189) states that in the early 1990s South African universities began to develop strategic plans and mission statements in a language that increasingly reflected the private sector. However, many academics found it difficult to assimilate the new terminologies emanating from the corporate sector as they clashed with the values enshrined in academic work and were uncondusive to collegial interactions. Portnoi goes on and states that universities in South Africa are still grappling with racist and sexist undertones in their universities despite the existence of the 1998 Employment Equity Act (EEA) which sought to transform academic workplaces into inclusive workplaces which are more representative of the South African society (2009:190).

It is for this reason that Robinson (2016:17) contends that academics' individual and collective identities are being undermined by increased workplace pressures, national educational policies as well as the forces of globalization. Ultimately, this leads to *de-centered academic identities* indicative of the ever increasing de-centering of the academic from the core functions of academy. To clarify this point, Robinson further states that academics' understandings of what constitutes significant discipline relevant research are being de-centered by the existence of institutional and national competitive research evaluations. This means that academics hoping to score well in these evaluation exercises must chase 'volume' over 'quality' of publications. Additionally, it is the management of HEIs (rather than academics) who decide research concentrations as part of institution-wide research strategies (2016:18).

Such changes, whether inspired for the right moral reasons, create a significant shift at the level of an individual's values and the underlying belief structures. Since an individual's values underpin and explain the individual's identity, any change in these values has an impact upon identity. For example, modularization, semesterisation and the use of accreditation of experiential learning for credit accumulation and transfer schemes are examples of relatively recent specific manifestations of managerialism in universities in England (Lomas & Lygo-Baker, 2006). Other researchers such as Morley (2003) contend that universities have been transformed into classic Fordist organisations that are involved in the large-scale production or massification of higher education as a public service.

Morley (2003) goes on to states that this application of Fordism principles to HE has led to the 'the industrialization of higher education'. Moreover, in many HEIs, there currently exists a prevailing notion of the 'student as a customer', with academic staff encouraged to meet the needs of students. According to Lomas and Lygo-Baker (2006) students increasingly understand themselves as consumers, entitled to agreed standards of provision and to the full information about the quality of what is provided. Under these circumstances, renewable contracts have become the norm with junior academic staff members citing problems of job security and lack of opportunities for career progression.

Most academics have also observed increasing accountability and budgetary difficulties as well as decreasing autonomy and deterioration of working conditions closely related to new managerialism. For example, Sang, Powell, Finkel & Richards, (2015:237) state that increased focus on performance management and measurement in HE contributes to concerns about diminishing opportunities to exercise autonomy and academic freedom, declining collegiality and increasing quantification of academic output. Accordingly, the job satisfaction of academics has steadily declined, raising the concern that academics may lose their key position and leadership role within HE as well as their role in the future development of society (Lai, 2010:272-273).

3.3.2.3 Academic Identities across boundaries of practice

Today academics are highly mobile; they move across boundaries into other CoP within and beyond HE. As they do so, they learn to take on different identities (Vandeyar, 2010:917). However, if the fluidity of identities is not recognised by individuals within a particular COP, then academics may find it increasingly difficult to sustain the membership of those communities and may even end up resorting to finding new locations and CoP which have a better sense of identity coherence. This underlines the view that CoP are not self-contained entities. Instead, they develop in larger historical, social, cultural and institutional contexts with own specific resources and constraints (Wenger, 1998:79). Wenger further states that the local-global interplay of identities needs to be understood within the broader context in which they operate since broader categories and institutions not only attract people's attention

but are also often more publicly reified than the local CoP. Hence people tend to experience them as part of a lived identity (1998:162). Despite the situation described above, it is critical to mention that the local-global interplay of identities relies heavily on participation and non-participation of its members. For example, the academic identities of lecturers at NUL are, to some extent, influenced by their interactions with other academics and professionals within and outside Lesotho although the bulk of their participation is at NUL.

It is for this reason that Wenger (1998:112) refers to the '*boundary encounters and the negotiation of meaning*'. He states that individuals from different or related CoP have boundary encounters such as meetings, conversations and visits which may take the form of: (1) one-on-one 'candid' conversations between two members of CoP, separated by a boundary in an effort to advance their boundary relations; (2) visiting a practice which involves a broader exposure to the CoP being visited and how its members engage with one another even though it may not necessarily afford the host similar experiences; and (3) sending delegations of participants from each CoP in social encounters where the negotiation of meaning takes place simultaneously among members (Wenger, 1998:112).

Wenger further states that this reflects the power that individuals have to define and affect their relations to the rest of the world. It also reflects how individuals locate themselves in a social landscape, what they care about, what they choose to know or neglect, with whom they seek connections or avoid, and how they engage and direct their energies (1998:167-168). Therefore an identity - even in its aspects that are formed in a specific CoP - is not just local to that community since people come together in their CoPs not only to engage in pursuing some enterprise but also to figure out how their engagement fits in the broader scheme of things. Identity in practice is therefore always an interplay between the local and the global (Wenger, 1998:162).

To conclude, the above discussion on constituencies of academic identities seems to emphasise Lea and Stierer's (2011:608) assertion that academic identities are underpinned by four key assumptions: (1) 'research' is the trademark activity of the university academic; thus it is critical for academic identity formation and intellectual fulfilment while teaching and other activities are secondary at best; (2) academics' membership to disciplinary communities is a defining feature of their identities; (3) the political, economic and institutional circumstances in which academics work have changed yet the essence of academic identity has remained the same which has resulted in acute tensions, and (4) as a result of these changing circumstances, academics have lost crucial aspects of the autonomy and collegiality on which their identities have historically been based.

This sense of loss has led, in turn, to a form of collective nostalgia for the so-called 'golden age' of academia.

3.4 Factors influencing the construction of academic identities

Identity is something that one either builds or discovers for one self (Pratt, 2012:22). Therefore in this section various factors related to work and its setting, especially how they influence academic identities, is discussed. Specifically individual values, beliefs, attitudes and commitments were chosen as significant factors in the construction of academic identities based on Feather (2010:189) and Vandeyar's (2010:916) assertion that academic identities are interwoven into the essence of being for academics and represent; (1) numerous complex experiences, (2) the culture or defining communities and (3) individual work and life histories. This section therefore focuses on academic staff experiences of work and how they influence work behaviour, job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions.

3.4.1 Experiences

Wenger (1998:145) argues that an identity consists of 'negotiating the meanings of our experience of membership in social communities'. Thus similar to Mead (1934), Wenger (1998) recognises that identity is a pivot between the social and the individual. His concept of identity as 'lived' experience therefore derives from participation within CoP; it shows that identity is not merely a category, a trait, a role or a label, rather it is 'fundamentally an experience that involves both participation and reification' (Wenger, 1998:163). Essentially this implies that participation in CoP gives individuals certain experiences of participation and what their CoP pays attention to, reifies them as participants (Wenger, 1998:150). For example, daily interaction with others within and outside disciplinary communities at NUL not only creates relationships that define 'who' one is as an academic, but it also gives one specific meanings through engagement with others at NUL.

Within universities academic roles organise functions while academic identities organise meaning for the roles (Van Winkel et al., 2017:2). Even so, in line with many other professional contexts, HE "has been subject to discourses on the commodification of academic work, which strongly influence how one should 'do' academic work and 'be' an academic" (Carra, Fortune, Ennals, Cruz & Kohn, 2017:1). Since academic identities are constituted in the interplay between academics (agents) and the universities (social structures), it makes sense that structures continually condition academic identities and they, in turn, refer to the structures which confront them (Van Winkel et al., 2017:2). Accordingly, the ordinary view that academic work is divided between research, teaching and/or administration has begun to show increased fragmentation, with scholars and researchers realising that in reality the experiences of academics are not just a question of the number of roles but it is also the differential weighting of those roles given by academics themselves. In fact, it is argued that the cultural identity of the institution in which the academic is immersed in daily, significantly influences the basis and the continued

reconstitution of the academic identity itself. As such, it is likely that academics may develop different orientations to their academic identities (Gale, 2011:217). To illustrate, Anibas, Hanson-Brenner and Zorn (2009:212) state that new academics often feel overwhelmed upon first arrival in an academic setting despite that many have credentials and are experts in their professional fields of practice. They also feel ill-prepared for their new positions as educators, with many concerned over their performance as teachers. For example, Duffy (2013:620) found that the transition into HEIs is often challenging for educators moving from professional backgrounds, with many citing lack of preparation for the role, poor research skills, issues relating to academic status and relationships with other members of the academic community as the main problems encountered upon entry into academia.

Carra et al. (2017:1) also found that academics transitioning from practice to academia often lacked control over their ability to reach performance targets set by the institution. They were further shocked by the intense amount of course work, feelings of abandonment to figure things out themselves, the length of time required to prepare for the courses, the requirement for committee work and keeping up with ever-changing technologies and innovative teaching methods. As such, they struggle to balance all their responsibilities, professional and personal lives. However, in order to cope with the experiences of being a novice academic, many independently seek supportive collegial relationships or attempt to develop professional support systems. This speeds up their enculturation into the unfamiliar and secluded academic setting. These networks also provide them with a sounding board to work through new ideas, receive feedback and a safe platform from which to share concerns (Anibas et al., 2009:212).

The principal research question of this study asks: **How do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL?** Identity scholars and researchers have attempted to answer this question in other HE milieus. For example, Feather (2017) conducted research among twenty-six lecturers based in further education colleges (FECs) around the Yorkshire and Humber region in the UK. He was interested in finding out how lecturers delivering college-based HE (CBHE) viewed their workloads and how this influenced their engagement in scholastic activities. The findings of the study revealed that lack of time was a major factor for lecturers delivering CBHE. Besides this, lack of time was found to interfere in the delivery of CBHE as participants had huge amounts of administration that needed to be undertaken as part of their ongoing duties. This not only hindered their endeavours to research it also prevented them from finding time to manage their courses and cover for colleagues.

Sang, Powell, Finkel and Richards (2015) also conducted a study among UK academics to explore the causes and effects of long hours work culture among academics. The findings revealed three themes as responsible for the long hours work culture. These were workloads, promotion and travel. The theme '*workloads*' revealed that high workloads and long working hours were typical. Some participants

indicated that this was a culture in academia. There was also a shared need to manage high workloads and work outside normal working hours among participants. Further, the participants indicated that the pressure to work long hours was a product of the changing relationships between managers and academics.

The second theme, '*promotions*', revealed that participants believed that long working hours was necessary for promotion. Some participants also believed that particular disciplines were valued more than others and this set particular norms in terms of the nature of publications which were used for promotion. However, participants cited unclear benchmarks for promotion and an unclear application process as likely roadblocks to academic career advancement, therefore successful applications for promotion were believed to rest on the individual and their ability or willingness to state their case for promotion. The third theme '*travel*' was deemed a unique finding for the study as participants viewed travel (especially internationally) as essential for academic careers. While some participants viewed travel as a positive aspect of their job, others regarded it as being problematic due to its negative impact on their workloads (Sang et al., 2015).

Gale (2011) also conducted a qualitative study aimed at challenging the accepted overview of homogenous 'socialisation processes' into an academic identity among seventeen early-career academics in the UK post-1992 teaching-oriented institution. The findings of her study were that teaching, peers, research and the institution played differing roles in the construction of academic identities. The subtheme 'teaching' showed that participants saw students as being significant for their academic identities as they worked as teachers. Thus despite teaching large class sizes participants reported enjoying their working relationships with students. The 'peers' subtheme revealed that colleagues who shared issues concerning students, teaching as well as offering organisational and emotional support were a major influence on academic identities. 'Research' showed that participants did not consider it to be central to their identities; instead, it was seen as a major change from ordinary teaching. Lastly 'the institution' subtheme, although mentioned by only a few participants, was found to be somewhat unrelated to the academic work. Some participants stated that they did not view themselves as integral parts of the institution while others thought that the institution seemed to contradict the work of academics, particularly at the level of teaching and relationships with students.

Darabi, Macaskill and Reidy (2017) also conducted a study to investigate both positive and negative experiences among a sample of thirty-one academics in a predominantly teaching-focused UK university. The findings of their study revealed six themes: 'administrative loads', 'coping with stress at work', 'task preferences', 'the academic role', 'positive and negative feelings around research/scholarship' and 'thoughts around leaving academia'. Regarding the theme '*administrative loads*,' the participants were generally unhappy with increasing administrative tasks and wanted some

of the tasks to be removed from their responsibilities, as they perceived administrative tasks as negatively affecting their productivity, frustrating and exhausting them. The '*Coping with stress at work*' theme revealed that participants chose different ways of dealing with stress. These included focusing on relationships with colleagues or the autonomy inherent in their jobs. Almost all the respondents also reported working harder and longer especially in the evenings and weekends. However, some of them chose negative coping strategies such as blaming themselves for not keeping up with the demands of their work, depriving themselves of sleep and longing for the end of the term. The third theme, '*task preferences in the academic role,*' showed that many academic staff members emphasised teaching as a core part of their academic identity (rather than research and administration) although they did recognise that the combination of teaching and research was ideal. Participants further saw that balanced workloads of teaching, research and essential administration were also ideal.

Theme four, '*features of the academic role,*' revealed that participants valued their relationships with students. They were particularly interested in seeing students progress and develop their knowledge and understanding. The findings were also that when students exhibited positive attitudes towards their studies, then academics were more satisfied. However, some participants commented on the negative aspects of their interaction with students. They reported that some students were less respectful, disruptive in class and sent very disrespectful and demanding emails. Even so, increases in student numbers and decreases in funding made it more difficult for staff to maintain appropriate levels of student support. The participants also revealed that 'relationships with colleagues' was one of the most valued elements of academic work, with many participants stating that sharing experiences and support gained from colleagues was an important facet of academic work. Workloads and how teaching is timetabled and the number and length of sessions allocated were an issue for many participants.

The '*Positive and negative feelings around research/scholarship*' theme revealed that many interviewees regarded research as a fundamental aspect of their role, with some participants commenting that research epitomised their uniqueness as academics. For some participants, having a paper accepted for a conference or for publication in a journal or having a book published were identified as extremely rewarding. Other participants indicated that the university focused more on teaching than on research, hence there was a need to provide more support for research and scholarship. Some frustrations, such as staff being asked to teach in areas where their subject knowledge was spread too thinly, were apparent. Many participants also cited lack of time due to increased teaching and administrative loads as the biggest barrier to doing research. Lastly, the findings were that the '*thoughts around leaving the academic environment*' theme was based on job satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction, with participants indicating that they were satisfied with teaching, positive relationships with colleagues, students' progression and research. For others, there was evidence of really valuing the life of an academic but salary was an issue. For others, the notion of leaving academia was almost unthinkable

although some had considered it but were stuck. Only a small number of participants considered resigning, with some stating that they would leave immediately for a job that was less stressful. Other participants who were newly appointed into teaching positions indicated that they were disillusioned by academic work and reported feeling stuck.

A similar study was conducted by Van Winkel et al. (2017) among eighteen academics at a new Dutch university. Its aim was to describe how participants understood their academic identity within an extended work portfolio. The findings revealed six identities related to participants' working lives. Firstly, participants had an academic identity of a 'continuous learner,' which reflected participants career dispositions. This identity included participants with *development in research-related teacher roles* who preferred short-term research activities to enhance their teaching and those with 'a *novel researcher roles*' as a *challenge* identity.

They had excellent teaching skills and expressed a desire to develop new identities as researchers. Secondly, Van Winkel and colleagues found a 'disciplinary expert' academic identity which reflected maturity through participation in the academic world. Participants with this identity valued intellectual growth in their respective disciplines and included participants with the *depth of understanding of the disciplinary field*, who liked delving deeply into a subject and cited curiosity about the subject-related topics as a motivator for engaging in research and those who were *recognised and persuasive experts* who strived to be credible disciplinary experts.

The findings also revealed a 'skilled researcher' academic identity which reflected participants who strived to enhance their research competencies. This academic identity reflected what the participants considered to be the ingredients in 'being' and 'becoming' a researcher. It included participants who were *gatherers of research building blocks* who focused on understanding the building blocks of research, those who emphasised *quality through craftsmanship* and believed that research was a process of discovery or an artisanal journey which involved being absorbed in reading and writing as well as *innovative teachers* who believed that research was an innovative endeavour aimed at uncovering deeper causes of phenomena (Van Winkel et al., 2017).

Fourthly the findings showed participants with an 'evidence-based teacher' academic identity. Participants with this identity believed that research would enhance their teacher's standing as role models. Among them were those who saw themselves as *role models* who viewed research as contributing to personal change in teachers. Others believed in *research-based teaching* which they believed provided students with current disciplinary knowledge and its applicability while those who liked to *co-research with students* and were student-oriented research supervisors who valued involving students in staff research, saw this as mutually beneficial for understanding the challenges inherent in

students' research projects which would ultimately improve their supervising skills respectively (Van Winkel et al., 2017). The 'Guardian of the research work process' academic identity was found to relate to boundary work, with participants citing an *uninterrupted concentration on research work* as essential for being a researcher; as such they relate mental peace and focus to their research output although many perceive their teaching duties as their primary responsibility and as dominating their daily schedules. For others, the only way to ensure that one participated effectively in research was to employ *boundary work tactics* such as recovering lost research time through teaching hours, using free time, arranging for colleagues to stand in for them, postponing research work or opting for less demanding teaching roles (Van Winkel et al., 2017).

The findings further showed that the 'liaison officer' academic identity was also a boundary academic identity, with participants indicating that this involved moving beyond the boundaries of practice and functioning as a broker and developer and linking professional knowledge needs, students' learning objectives and educational innovations. Participants also cited the *educational institution* striving to update study programmes to enhance students' professional competences and employability and those who emphasised *professional practice* aimed to adapt research knowledge in professional practice by writing articles and giving presentations while those who emphasised *scientific research* aimed to contribute to existing bodies of knowledge and to have their publications accepted (Van Winkel et al., 2017).

Anibas et al. (2009) also conducted research to describe the experiences of novice teaching academic staff (TAS) in baccalaureate nursing education among ten participants in an Australian university. Five categories emerged from the data: feelings, preparation for role and expectations, resources, challenges and mentorship. The category 'feelings' revealed a variety of the feelings expressed by participants. These included worry, frustration, awkwardness, confusion, isolation, expendability as well as uncertainty about own performance and what to expect. 'Preparation for role expectations' revealed that participants took experiences from life, educational background, work and own student experiences to prepare for their roles as teachers.

The participants also reflected on 'resources' available to them as academics, with many indicating that the resources which they expected were support and relationships with faculty colleagues and others being helpful. They also cited campus orientation, university mentoring programs and computer/technical support as being most valuable. Regarding 'mentorship', participants indicated that mentorship was a long-term relationship grounded in feelings of connection and trust between the mentor and mentee. Lastly, participants reported that they faced challenges relating to the teaching styles and techniques, assessing students as well as personal and organisational challenges (Anibas et al., 2009).

Adams (2000) also examined in detail the experiences of four new academic staff during their first two years of teaching at a university in Australia. She held interviews with a sample of fifteen academic staff comprised of members of the university management and other senior managers. Several categories emerged from her study, time and workload, resources and support, reward and recognition, access to information and opportunity for creativity. Regarding the theme '*time and workload*', the findings showed that participants were tired, carried too much load and generally did not want to add more or new things to their loads. Some participants indicated that they wished they had more time for teaching, research and the profession.

New academics described the impact of their workloads on their private lives; they talked of pressure to maintain currency in their discipline, dealing with students who have problems in language, academic skills and writing as well as participating in activities for professional development. They also expressed concern over establishing and maintaining a liaison with industry contacts and advancing their careers. In the '*resources and support*' theme, the participants had varied attitudes, depending on their interpretation of resources (as either personal qualities or external provisions). Their attitudes also differed, depending on academic rank with many new academics not very concerned with poor resources while management were very concerned as they believed that they contributed to the low morale and tendency to work off-campus.

In terms of '*reward and recognition*', new academics indicated their dissatisfaction with the management style of the university which emphasised tangible products yet failed to focus on the intangible things which were part of the professional culture of the university (Adams, 2000). With regards to '*access to information*,' the findings also revealed that many academics felt that being asked to streamline and integrate university courses and weed out the subjects with low enrollments was a chore imposed on them with senior staff indicating powerlessness to comment on such issues in the university even when they are asked to, while new academics indicated that they found it difficult to attend faculty meetings or enquire about university operations. As such, they abandoned their participation in the collegial processes of the university.

The last theme, the '*opportunity for creativity*,' showed that participants were enthusiastic about this part of academic work. Many expressed the fun of being in the forefront of knowledge. However, it was observed that new academics felt that they had to give priority to teaching and preparation for teaching at the expense of research. Although they were still committed to their students, many new academics believed that research and publications would be beneficial for their career advancement, hence they planned to engage in such activities soon (Adams, 2000).

In a similar study aimed at describing the experiences of constructing an academic and occupational identity among thirteen Australian occupational therapy academics transitioning from practice to academia, Carra et al. (2017) found out one overarching theme (constructing and reconstructing identity) and two subthemes (striving to reach one's potential and growing through collaboration and support). The overarching theme *constructing and reconstructing identity* represented the dynamic and on-going process of creating an academic identity. The participants described this process as hinged on the ability to create a meaningful balance between their multiple roles as academics. A further analysis revealed that participants viewed their roles as researchers as based on developing an identity as a scholar (inclusive of teaching and research).

The first subtheme '*striving to reach one's potential*' showed that participants were aware of their 'potential' to become scholars. However, they indicated that this 'potential' was dependent on a shift in academic identity; that is, until one reflected, employed own agency and framed own academic identity to that of a scholar, one's potential as a scholar would remain undeveloped. The second subtheme '*growing through collaboration and support*' emphasised the connection between 'belonging' and 'becoming' an academic. As such, participants were aware of the influence of the supportive nature of the group and stressed the connections with others within their fields of study in helping them 'belong'. Similarly, the participants were aware that in order to 'become' academics they had to write, reflect and interact with the group (Carra et al., 2017).

Gardner and Willey (2016) also sought to characterise the transition in academic identity from a discipline-based researcher to a discipline-based education researcher among engineering academics in Australia. The findings of their study revealed that the intellectual, networking and institutional aspects of academic identity construction highlighted the need to become a particular type of scholar or researcher in the transformation of identity. Similarly, Kyvik (2013) in a study among academic staff in research-intensive Norwegian universities showed that academics revised and enhanced their performance by networking, collaborating, managing, conducting research, getting it published and evaluating other's research.

However, research indicates that although academics would like undertake research, lack of time and institutional support made engaging in research difficult. For example, the results of Feather's (2012) qualitative study among twenty-six FECs offering higher education business programmes in the UK found that many lecturers perceived the management at their individual institutions as not interested in whether they wished to do research or not. Therefore lecturers perceiving their primary role to be that of teaching rather than attending conferences, or undertaking further studies in their fields.

3.4.2 Work behaviour

Every organisation has three types of general resources which are physical, financial and human. The most critical one is, no doubt, the human resources of an organisation because they have the capability to accelerate the process of organisational development or to demolish the organisational progress (Rasheed, Aslam & Sarwa, 2010). Olusola (2001:569) is of a similar view and adds that the most powerful resources for the achievement of organisational goals is the human resources; however, their effectiveness depends on the way in which they perform their job duties. Accordingly, work behaviour is the formal behaviour that employees exhibit or do in an employment (Olusola, 2001:570); thus it is manifest when an employee does something that is related to their work (Mawoli & Babandako, 2011:2).

Work behaviour also represents both extent and the way in which employees perform the job tasks according to the prescribed job description. Thus it is an important factor for individual work effectiveness and the organisation's success or failure (Saeed, Mussawar, Lodhi, Iqbal, Nayab & Yaseen, 2013; Saetang, Sulumnad, Thampitak & Sungkaew, 2010). As is the case in other social institutions, the quality of the educational process and its products are unquestionably influenced by the lecturer's work behaviour because they are expected to lead to a very high job performance (Ololube, 2006). The work behaviour of academic staff as teachers and researchers determines much of the student satisfaction, has an impact on student learning and, thus, leads to the contribution of HEIs to the society (Machado-Taylor, Soares, Ferreira & Gouveia, 2011:35).

Due to the centrality of the roles that it plays in HEIs, the work behaviour of academic staff as teachers and researchers has been found to determine much of the student satisfaction and to have an impact on student learning and the contribution of HEIs to the society (Mammen, 2006). In fact, "the entire edifice of education is shaky if the performance of teachers is weak and ineffective (Hanif, 2010:2). For this reason, effective work behaviour of teachers is a must for educational improvement (Hanif, 2010). Efficiency also suffers with demotivated and dissatisfied personnel (Rasheed, et al., 2010; Olusola, 2001) because academic staff motivation is a significant contributor in delivering knowledge and grooming students to become global citizens and masters of their specialised fields. Moreover, academic staff motivation is important because motivated lecturers are likely to work for educational reforms and to perform highly (Rasheed et al., 2010). Their performance is therefore crucial for the university (Beyth-Marom, Harpaz-Gorodeisky, Bar-Haim & Godder, 2006).

In HE settings, Steyn (2002:84) argues that the work behaviour of academic staff can be improved when attention is paid to the kind of work environment that enhances the staff sense of professionalism, motivation and morale. Therefore, by identifying the factors that enhance the motivation and morale of academic staff, management of HEIs can implement and execute effective strategies to ensure that

academics perform their duties in an effective, enthusiastic and motivated manner. However, management needs to recognise that different motivators are appropriate for different staff members and good management consists of recognising and working with individual differences. Nevertheless, it is imperative to note that the study of the relationship between job satisfaction and work behaviour has a controversial history and much research is still pending on this issue (Mawoli & Babandako, 2011; Saari & Judge, 2004).

The first subsidiary question of this study is: **How do reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff?** Thus, the study explores the relationship between academic identity and work behaviour. It is, therefore crucial to note that the way employees do their work is not a single unified construct but it is a multidimensional construct consisting of more than one kind of behaviour (Mawoli & Babandako, 2011:3). Ahmed, Hussain, Ahmed, Ahmed and ud Din (2012:337) explain this further:

Aptitude, attitude, subject mastery, teaching methodology, personal characteristics, the classroom environment, general mental ability, personality, relations with students, preparation and planning, effectiveness in presenting subject matters, relations with other staff, self-improvement, relations with parents and community, poise, intellect, teaching techniques, interaction with students and teaching competence demonstrated [also affect the work behaviour of academic staff].

It has also been argued that work behaviour is multidimensional; it is influenced by (1) individual attributes, abilities and skills, (2) organisational variables, and (3) the individuals' particular attitudes, perceptions and motivation to perform (Olson & Borman, 1989, cited in Bell, 2008). Wiley (1997) concurs and states that in most instances, employee performance is determined by three things, ability, the work environment and motivation. According to French (2005:79) there are three components of work behavior, individual attributes, organisational support and work effort. Firstly, 'individual attributes' relate to *ability* (to accomplish tasks) and *job competence* (knowledge, thought processes and/or attitudes) which are likely to lead to meeting set performance standards (Pinder, 2008:20).

Secondly, 'organisational support' influences work behaviour since inadequacies and situational constraints such as poor time planning, inadequate budgets, problems with work technology, unclear instruction, unfair levels of expected performance and inflexibility of procedures (French et al., 2005) can render even those who are motivated to perform well unable to do so. Lastly, work behaviour may be thought of in terms of task and contextual performance which relate to the effectiveness with which employees perform activities that contribute to the organisation's technical and social contexts

(Jankingthong & Rurkkhum, 2012:115). In terms of situational causes Rafferty and Griffin (2009) state that people's work behaviour is assumed to depend on their current circumstances, situation or the environment that they are in. The most typical categorisation of facets was proposed by Smith et al. (1969, cited in Rafferty & Griffin, 2009) who identified five facets, namely, pay, promotion, co-workers, supervision and the work itself. Recently research on lecturer's work behaviour has been linked to academic workloads as well as the balance between research and teaching (Houston, Meyer & Paewai, 2006). For example, in a mail survey to examine the impact of participation in decision-making on lecturer work behaviour in HEIs in Yogyakarta Province in Indonesia, Sukirno and Siengthai (2011) found that participative decision-making and academic rank had a significant effect on lecturer work behaviour. This means that involving lecturers in educational decision-making would be useful to improve not only lecturer performance but also organisational performance.

In a study undertaken at fifty selected colleges at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan to measure and summarise the factors that influenced the lecturers' performance, Ahmed et al. (2012) also found that subject mastery was ranked highest by lecturers while teaching methodology and personal characteristics were ranked intermediary and attitude towards students was rated lowest in the factors that affected lecturer work behaviour. Further, Warsi, Fatima and Sahibzada (2009) found that job and agency characteristics, attitudes toward merit pay, organisational trust and commitment, importance of monetary rewards, linkage between pay and performance and fairness of pay system affect the work behaviour of employees.

In a survey investigating occupational stress for academics in South African HEIs, Barkhuizen and Rothmann (2008) also found that academics experienced stress relating to pay and benefits, overload and work-life balance. In Nigeria Akinfolarin and Ehinola (2014) conducted a study among a randomly selected sample of fifty lecturers and ten heads of departments to investigate motivation and effective performance of academic staff in Adekunle Ajasin University. The findings were that encouragement for creativity and innovation, appreciation on genuine effort, award with impressive titles and acknowledgement of achievements enhanced the performance of university lecturers. Their study also revealed that provision of adequate chances for professional growth and instructional facilities improved a lecturer's performance.

Similar research (that investigated the experiences and how twenty professionals-turned-academics in Australia defined, resisted and took up the multiple and changing roles associated with academic work revealed that the majority of participants experienced nostalgia for universities of the past which they imagined to be places of intellectual elitism, curiosity-driven research and scholarship. They not only identified strongly with being practitioners within their professional fields but were also committed to

field-oriented, practical education and resisted taking up researcher identities, understanding 'real' research in narrowly defined terms (Santoro and Snead, 2013).

3.4.3 Job satisfaction

The second subsidiary question of this study asks: **How do descriptions of the (mis)alignment between work roles, expectations and individual values influence meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics' professional self-concepts?** Essentially this question determine how narratives of fulfilment depict the match or mismatch between one's work, values and expectations as well as how these influence the professional identity of academics at NUL. Academics' feelings, experiences and perceptions about their work not only provide an insight into how they construct their academic identities but they also reveal the existing tensions between them as individuals and their workplace (King & Billot, 2016:157).

The attitudes that academics maintain towards their jobs are often the result of diverse features of their job, including social status and experiences (both good and bad) resulting from their job environment (Celik, Man, Modrak, Dima & Pachura, 2011:8). Academics' idealised self-images should be perceived as the sum of different characters like ascribed traits, socialisation, values and expectations that they bring into the workplace to fill empty positions in the organisation (Wharton, Rotolo & Bird, 2000:68). Baron and Pfeffer (1994) also contend that any sociological analysis of job attitudes should focus on a social rather than economic perspective; emphasis should be on work-groups, social processes, social interdependencies, customs, informal norms and coalition of interests as these are the sources of meaning for individuals within organisations (Wharton et al., 2000: 65-66).

This is illustrated by the findings of Basak and Govender's (2015) study aimed at designing a framework based on the factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction which found that working conditions, the work itself, administration policy, facilities, promotional opportunities, individual personal characteristics, supervision and leadership style as well as other factors like job security and workloads influenced academics' job satisfaction. Even so, the academic workplace is characterised by fragmentation which has had an intense effect on academic participation and professional identities of academics (Vandeyar, 2010:915). Similarly, reward structures across disciplines within academia are based on prestige and symbolic recognition such as publication and awards (Clarke et al., 2013:7-8).

One of the best known and researched job attitudes in human history is job satisfaction. It describes a positive feeling about a job, resulting from an evaluation of its characteristics (Robbins, Judge, Millet & Boyle, 2014; Judge et al. 2009:74). The most frequently used definition of job satisfaction is that it is a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences

(Saari & Judge, 2004). As such, a person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive feelings about his or her job while a dissatisfied person holds negative feelings. Job satisfaction is essentially a positive emotional response to the job situation resulting from attaining what the employee wants from the job; thus, job satisfaction is a matrix of job factors which make people like their work situation and head for it without distaste at the beginning of a work day (Kaur & Kainth, 2009).

Oshagbemi (2000) adds that job satisfaction is a general attitude that employees have towards their jobs. If an employee expects little and gets little or expects a lot and gets a lot, he or she will be satisfied. On the contrary, when one expects a lot but gets a little, then one is dissatisfied. It can, therefore be surmised that job satisfaction as a 'general expression of workers positive attitudes built up towards their jobs' (Celik et al. 2011:8). Celik et al. further states that the attitudes that workers maintain towards their jobs are the result of diverse features of that job and the social status that they are accorded as well as the experiences in their job environment (2011:8).

Singh and Tiwari (2011:32) have a different opinion. For them, individuals' differing levels of job satisfaction are affected by their tenure or the so called 'honeymoon' and 'hangover' effects of job satisfaction. They define the honeymoon effect of job satisfaction as the tendency to enjoy high levels of job satisfaction on new jobs while the hangover effect is the tendency for people's level of job satisfaction to drop over time from when a position is brand new to the current one. For Robbins et al. (2014) this signifies the fact that an employee's job satisfaction is a complex collection of many discrete elements. Ironically, and similar to identity, there is still no current general agreement regarding what job satisfaction is, despite its wide usage in scientific research and everyday life (Aziri, 2011: 77).

Nevertheless, job satisfaction arguably remains one of the most important variables with regard to work in the research studies that associate it with organisational variables such as turnover, organisational commitment and job performance (Keller & Semmer, 2013). In addition, job satisfaction is said to be relevant to the overall physical and mental wellbeing of academic staff and has implications for organisational effectiveness (Oraman, 2011; Ololube, 2006; Schulze, 2006; Rusconi, 2005). Conversely, dissatisfaction among academic staff can be threatening for their physical and psychological health and quality of life, while precluding them from achieving personal and organisational goals. Lack of motivation effectively reduces enthusiasm in the quality and quantity of work (Samariha et al., 2012). Secondly, job satisfaction influences the quality of work, productivity, absenteeism and turnover of academic staff (Nyanga, Mudhovozi, Chireshe & Maunganidze, 2012; Anum, Hassan, Mannan & Urooj, 2011; Eyupoglu & Saner, 2013; Schulze, 2006; Oshagbemi, 2000; Ch'ng, Chong & Nakesvari, 2010). For Keeler and Semmer (2013) difference in the job satisfaction levels of workers result from either individual or situational causes. Regarding individual sources of job satisfaction, Judge and Larsen (2001) identify four types of individual factors that influence job

satisfaction. Firstly, employee engagement depicts an individual's satisfaction with and enthusiasm for the work he or she does (Robbins et al. 2014:66). Secondly, job involvement measures the degree to which people identify psychologically with their job and consider their perceived performance level important to self-worth. Employees with a high level of job involvement strongly identify with and really care about the kind of work that they do. Thirdly, mental empowerment refers to the employees' beliefs in the degree to which they influence their work environment, their competence, the meaningfulness of their job and the perceived autonomy in their work.

Lastly, perceived organisational support influences job satisfaction because it signifies the degree to which the employees believe that the organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Robbins, Judge, Odendaal & Roodt, 2009:76). Another common distinction in job satisfaction is between extrinsic and intrinsic satisfaction. Satisfaction with authority, policies and practices as well as pay and promotions has been considered as extrinsic satisfaction while satisfaction with ability, achievement, advancement, social status co-workers, supervisors and the work itself are considered intrinsic satisfaction (Judge & Larsen, 2001). With regard to academics, Lacy and Sheehan (1997:307) propose that academic job satisfaction should come from the nature of profession itself; that is, emphasis should be on those things which are intrinsic to academics' work such as teaching, scholarly achievements and the nature of work (Lacy & Sheehan, 1997:307).

The provision of solutions for the problems of academics and universities is a prerequisite for a country aiming to advance in education, science and technology. In this context, job satisfaction of academics stands out as an important subject (Dost, 2012:4918). Adams (2000:72-73) states that academics tend to emphasise intrinsic reward in their work; that is they seek to enhance their own professional standards, to serve the interests of their discipline and profession and their students. She further states that another form of reward that academics prefer is recognition and this may be in the form of feedback given by students, career advancement, peer recognition in publications and community service and success with competitive research or teaching grants.

Research has also shown that many factors contribute to the job satisfaction of academics. According to Umur (2011) these factors include salary, benefits, job security, working conditions, working hours, the work itself, leadership and social relationships. A similar study aimed at investigating job satisfaction and performance among academic staff in nineteen private colleges in Penang, Malaysia, Ch'ne et al. (2010) found that management support, salary and promotions were significantly correlated with the job satisfaction of academic staff. Na, Amzat and Hussein (2011) in a survey to examine the levels of job satisfaction of academic staff in two universities in Harbin city in China also found that academic staff were satisfied with the work itself, their co-workers and supervision but they were not satisfied with their income and opportunities for promotion. Sharma and Jyoti's (2009) study among 120 faculty staff at

Jammu University in India found that there was a positive relationship between management, colleagues' attitude, growth opportunities, pay, recognition and job satisfaction. In a similar study, Dost (2012) investigated the job satisfaction of 2073 Turkish academics (professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers, research assistants and instructors), using the *Job Satisfaction Scale for Academics* that focused on certain occupational factors and personal variables. The study showed that job satisfaction of academics did not differ significantly according to weekly course load, place of graduate schooling and level of proficiency in English.

Research by Eyupoglu and Saner (2013), focusing on job satisfaction of academics in North Cyprus using a Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), found that generally academics were satisfied with their jobs; however, they wanted work tasks that corresponded to their personal interests and allowed them considerable autonomy in task selection and decision-making. Eyupoglu and Saner (2013:2818) also found that academics wanted a sense of achievement, facilitated by feedback from supervisors; they also wanted clarity of what was expected of them and harmony among the various people that they worked with. They further wanted promotions and salaries to be awarded equitably and at levels that met their expenses respectively.

Research has also focused on the factors that influence the job satisfaction of academic staff in South Africa. For example, Mammen (2006) found that students not taking their academic work seriously and poor student attitudes to their studies were some of the most common factors that reduced the job satisfaction of academics in South Africa. Uncertainty about the continuity of the institution, poor management, problems with financial administration, weak research support, lack of promotion opportunities and high workloads were found to be other factors that contributed to the job dissatisfaction of academic staff.

In a survey utilising a questionnaire on a sample of 94 respondents in a study of a residential and distance university in South Africa, Schulze (2006) also found that 93% of academics were satisfied with the courses and the knowledge of the content of what they taught. Thereafter, most (87.6 %) were satisfied with their own skills in teaching methods, the authority and autonomy that they had in order to choose teaching methods and content (82%). For Schulze (2006), the various research efforts on the job satisfaction of academic staff indicates that the job satisfaction of academic staff needs to be improved. That is, the management of HEIs needs to uphold the factors that currently generate satisfaction. These factors include:

“involving academic staff in courses that they are interested in; preserving their academic autonomy, the right to choose the direction of their own research and the opportunity for continued learning; upholding the availability of research leave and flexible working

hours; bolstering positive interpersonal relationships between colleagues; ensuring pleasant physical surroundings and preserving the reputation of HE institutions” (Schulze, 2006:333).

Chipunza and Malo (2017) also conducted a survey with a sample of two hundred and seventy-four academics at university X in the Free State Province of South Africa to investigate their perceptions of organisational culture. The study found that academics had positive views of organisational culture and its impact on job performance, based on outcomes, attention to details and team orientation evident in their university. In another survey among academics at Africa University in Zimbabwe, Bigirimana (2016) also found that the motivation of academic staff was generally downplayed by factors such as uncompetitive salaries, non-collegiality decision-making, opportunity or lack of opportunity in career development and academic freedom.

The reviewed literature has shown that academics’ job satisfaction is influenced by the feelings, experiences and perceptions about their work. It is for this reason that Baron and Pfeffer (1994) contend that any sociological analysis of job attitudes should focus on a social rather than economic perspective. Wharton, Rotolo and Bird (2000: 65-66) also add that emphasis should be on work-groups, social processes, social interdependencies, customs, informal norms and coalition of interests, as these are sources of meaning for individuals within organisations.

3.4.4 Organisational identification and commitment

Organisational identification (OI) is defined as the specific ways in which individuals define themselves in terms of their membership in a particular organisation; thus organisational identification is a form of social identity (Cole & Bruch, 2006:588). That is, it derives from the meanings tied to or derived from the social group (Burke & Stets, 2003:129). Thus, OI means that employees do things because they want to maintain their connection with the organisation since its values or goals appeal to the individual while internalisation means that the organisation’s and the employees’ goals match and that employees act accordingly (O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986). In contrast, organisational commitment (OC) depicts the overall strength of an individual’s emotional attachment, identification and involvement in an organisation (Cole & Bruch, 2006:588; Paxson, 2003:526). The third subsidiary question that this study asked was: **How do internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influence academic identity trajectories?** Essentially, it sought to determine whether academics intend to stay committed to NUL and their academic identities or not. Thus the bonds which academics have with NUL were explored; it was also determined whether they were emotional about an exchange of loyalty for pay and benefits (Paxson, 2003:526). It is of import to mention that before the 1970s scholars viewed OC as a ‘unidimensional’ construct, based only on affective or emotional attachment.

Thus, OC was viewed as having three components; (1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values; (2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation and (3) a definite desire to stay working with the organisation (Paxson, 2003:525). However, after the 1970s researchers expanded and advanced the so called unidimensional view of OC and started viewing it as having multiple forms. For example, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) suggested that the bond between the individuals and the organisation could take either one of the following three forms, compliance, identification and internalisation. Subsequently, Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed three forms of OC; affective, normative and continuance. They stated that affective commitment (AC) refers to the emotional ties that an individual has for the organisation; thus, AC refers to the emotional attachment that one feels towards the employing organisation. Allen and Meyer (1991) further stated that individuals with AC are involved in and strongly identify with their membership in the organisation (Paxson, 2003; Shore & Wayne, 1993).

Secondly, Allen and Meyer (1991) speak of normative commitment (NC) and state that it represents the feelings of obligation to remain a member of an organisation, hence normative commitment refers to the obligation that a person has in order to remain in an organisation. Lastly, continuance commitment (CC) is the tendency to engage in consistent lines of activity based on the individual's recognition of the 'costs' associated with discontinuing the activity or the rewards of staying in it. Therefore, CC develops once employees recognise that they have accumulated investments that would be lost if they resigned from the organisation or when they recognise that comparable employment is limited (Paxson, 2003:526; Shore & Wayne, 1993:774). In this light, employees with a high affective commitment continue working with an organisation because they want to do so. Those with a high normative commitment continue to work because they think that they should while those with a high continuance commitment continue working because they think that they need to (Paxson, 2003:526).

Researchers have long been interested in both OI and OC although confusion remains between the two terms despite theoretical and empirical developments (Cole & Bruch, 2006:588). As defined by Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982:27), OC reflects the relative strength of an individual's *identification* with and involvement in a particular organisation while Meyer and Allen (1991:67) define OC in terms of affective commitment and state that it is an employee's emotional attachment to *identification* with and involvement in the organisation. With identification clearly mentioned in these two highly cited definitions of OC, it is clear why researchers sometimes confuse OI and OC. However, Cole and Bruch (2006:589) state that the implications of *identification* and sense of oneness with the organisation that differentiates the construct of identification from commitment. That is, for academics to identify with NUL they need to see themselves as mentally and emotionally intertwined with NUL. Identification is argued to contribute to members' definition of 'who am I?' in terms of the organisation in which he or she belongs, thus it is an important aspect of one's self-concept (Cole & Bruch, 2006:589). The university

is one such setting. According to Henkel (2011:68), it is a significant source of academic identity. Thus within HEIs academics may develop institutional identity in four ways (1) identification, (2) disidentification, (3) ambivalent identification and (4) neutral identification (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:2). Firstly, identification represents a desirable attachment that individuals feel for their employing organisation. Academics are said to identify with their HEI when they define themselves (at least partly) in terms of what they understand their HEI to represent. Thus, identification not only positively influences the work behaviour and commitment of workers but it also fosters in them a sense of meaning, belonging, and control at work (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:2).

In contrast, disidentification represents an 'active' separation of an individual from the organisation. Thus, disidentification with the organisation occurs when one describes oneself as not having the same attributes or principles that he or she believes to define the organisation (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:2-3). Kreiner and Ashforth add that disidentification may entail an organisational member's repulsion of the organisation's mission, culture or centrally defining aspects to the point that he or she consciously or actively separates his or her identity and reputation from those of the organisation (2004:3). It may also involve an employee deliberately concealing the details of his or her place of employment from others, being vocal about aspects (of the organisation) that they find objectionable and/or the identifying characteristics that make him or her distinct from others in the organisation (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:3).

However, disidentification is not merely the opposite of identification. It consists of disconnecting negative aspects of the organisation from oneself (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:3). For example, if academics like to teach students, they may identify with their HEIs commitment to providing quality education, just as they are likely to disidentify with it if it does not adequately provide up-to-date teaching and learning resources that enhance academics' enjoyment of teaching. Thus, it is important to recognise that disidentification with the organisation is undesirable; it not only represents the result of deep conflicts between the member and the organisation which may lead to high turnover but it may also lead to employees who, despite their dissatisfaction, continue to work at the organisation because they are cannot afford to leave or because they feel an obligation to stay with the organisation (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:3), not because they like to do the work that they are doing

The third dimension of organisational identification, ambivalent identification, refers to the complex and equivocal meanings that people attach to modern organisations, based on their values, goals and beliefs which often lead to simultaneous identification and disidentification with one's organisation (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:4). This implies that an individual identifies with some aspects of the organisation while not identifying with others. For example, homosexual academics may feel a strong identification with most of the values of the HEI, but perceive that their lifestyle is not accepted within it. Lastly, neutral identification depicts the obvious absence of both identification and disidentification with

an organisation (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:4); that is, it represents low identification between the person and the organisation. As such, neutral identification is not merely an absence of perceptions and attachment but it is also a belief and a mode of self-definition in its own right as it is influenced either by past work experiences with organisations, self-descriptions or management styles (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:5). However, people do not live in immutable contexts experience discontinuities at various points in their lives. Therefore their life trajectories are not uniform (Marsico, 2012:121).

The concept 'turnover intentions' represents another critical element in the academics' organisational commitment and identification. Although different from the actual turnover behaviour, the intention to leave is a response to the employee's current situation (Paxson, 2003:528). It refers to the intention of the employees to quit their organisation (Ali, 2008) and it is said to be related to the affective and normative commitment and slightly less with continuance commitment (Paxson, 2003:526). Academic staff, like other workers, may also quit their jobs; thus obtaining and retaining quality academic staff is a continuing concern that is facing educational leaders at all levels (Ali, 2008). This study was based on the assumption that academics who have an emotional attachment (affective) or feelings of obligation to remain at NUL (normative) tend to be prone to the intention to quit than those who recognise that they have accumulated investments and are not willing to lose them through resignation those who recognise that comparable employment is limited.

A question may arise, 'does NUL benefit from academics with continuance commitment? According to the study by Shore and Wayne (1993), affective commitment was found to be positively related to both compliance and altruism while continuance commitment was not. Thus it seems that although employees with a continuance commitment are likely to stay loyal, they may also not display desirable work behaviours. McAlpine et al. (2014:952) share similar sentiments. They argue that 'emotional aspects of experience or the idiosyncratic nature of individuals' histories and expectations' shape their identity and engagement as academics. However, for them these experiences explain how academics navigate their career journeys (McAlpine et al. 2014:953).

McAlpine and colleagues further state that academic identities highlight the simultaneous stability of the academic self over time as well as a sense of ongoing change. As such, they use the word 'trajectory' to not only denote learning and changes over time but also to explain the intertwining of work experiences with personal desires and relationships. However, they caution that identity trajectory does not imply a linear view of learning and change; rather, it is an ongoing learning process of individual intentions and experiences across roles and life. Instead, the elements of this identity-trajectory consist of three interwoven elements, 'intellectual', 'networking' and 'institutional' elements. The intellectual strand represents contributions to one's disciplinary field and it leaves a trail of artefacts such as publications, citations and papers. The networking strand is both interpersonal and intertextual and it

represents local, national, and international networks that one has been and/or is connected to. It also includes research and publication collaborations with others as well as work that is done with professionals and membership of disciplinary organisations. Lastly, the institutional strand represents the interactions of academics in their workplace (McAlpine et al., 2014:954). Here HEIs can support or constrain an individual's networking and intellectual strands; as such the institutional strand accounts for how the structural features of the workplace mediate (either positively and/or negatively) the development of the networking and intellectual strands of academic work (Gardener & Willey, 2016:5). However, McAlpine, Amundsen and Jazvac-Martek (in Gardner & Willey, 2016:5) caution that although these three elements are intertwined, they need not be in step with each other. As such, each trajectory will vary individually in length, size and impact, and it will change over time.

McAlpine and Emmioğlu proposed an identity-trajectory framework to describe the development of an identity which "is particularly attentive to individual intention in navigating a way forward, while recognising the influence of structural constraints and unexpected opportunities" (2014:2). This recognition states that individual academic career intentions need to be understood against the background of agency and structure, as structures can support and constrain such agency (McAlpine et al., 2014:954). McAlpine (2012:39) also presents key constructs that underpin identity trajectories; (1) '*agency*' as an individual's effort to be intentional or to construct a way forward, given particular constraints and (2) '*the personal*' or the embedding of academic experiences within their broader lives. This construct is followed by (3) '*the past*' or earlier experiences, including the relationships on present intentions and imagined futures. (4) McAlpine refers to '*opportunity structures*' or what an individual academic knows to be the available career opportunities at any point in time. These opportunities then influence (5) '*horizons for action*' or career choices seen as personally viable at any particular time.

Research has investigated the factors that influence commitment among academics. For example, Barkhuizen and Rothman (2008) conducted a survey among 595 academics in South African HEIs to identify the indicators of occupational stress for academics. The findings of their study were that work overload, job control, resources and communication contributed significantly to the commitment of academics to their institution. In the HE sector, empirical studies have also linked job satisfaction and performance to an individual's intent to quit the organisation. For example, Khalid, Irshad and Mahmood (2012) found that when lecturers were not satisfied with their working conditions, they preferred to change institutions or leave the profession at once. Thus the issue of turnover intentions is critical for the success of any HEI. This is because academics play a myriad of roles for the HEI. They provide professional consultations, conduct academic research and publish their findings so that the community benefits (Awang & Ahmad, 2010:242). Likewise, academics are expected to render very high job performance, a high measure of loyalty, patriotism, dedication, hard work and commitment (Ololube, 2006). A healthy university climate is therefore essential because it does not only increase the job

satisfaction and motivation of academic staff but it also improves the learning environment and increases the productivity of the university (Nordin & Jusoff, 2009). Thus it is imperative to note that academic staff cannot perform competently if they are working in environments that rob them of their passion for the job (Fako, 2010). When they are so robbed, they complain of physical ailments such as tension, depression, lassitude, apprehension and sleeplessness (Ali, 2008). Dissatisfaction among academic staff also leads to their intention to leave academia and this ultimately leads to actual high levels of turnover. For example, it was found that academics in South Africa left their institutions for other universities because they “were not given even at least one additional salary-notch or promotion after obtaining a new higher degree” (Mannen, 2006:475).

In Zimbabwe, Nyanga et al. (2012) also found that human resources departments at HEIs in Masvingo were always hiring academic staff that resigned before or after the appointment was concluded. Chimanikire, Mutandwa, Gadzirayi, Muzondo and Mutandwa (2007) also contend that poor work motivation and job satisfaction constitute the main reasons for the upsurge in the departure of technical expertise in virtually all the departments and faculties in HEIs in Southern Africa. Similar results were observed for Bigirimana, Sibanda and Masengu’s (2016) study among academics at Africa University in Zimbabwe. The study was intended to assess the impact of staff working conditions on academic staff turnover. It showed that the working conditions were unfavourable, with most academics viewing their leaders as being insensitive and unsupportive of their work schedules. The respondents also rated discretionary treatment, fairness, rewards and distribution of resources negatively although they indicated that they enjoyed academic freedom and sustained networks among their colleagues.

Butoni (2011) also asserts that increasing numbers of students are unmatched by facilities such as small lecture rooms, insufficient number of seats, the use of dusty chalkboards and lack of public address systems for big classes. Not only do inadequate facilities affect the quality of HE but they also put lecturers off and contribute to the increasing decline in the prestige of lecturing in Ugandan universities. Thus it is not only the image and status of an academic career that is affected, but problems such as increased job dissatisfaction and work stress and a decline in commitment to the organisation that are evident in HEIs today (Pienaar & Bester, 2006).

Pienaar and Bester (2006) further state that increased labour turnover and reduced commitment from academic staff may give rise to several negative institutional outcomes. Firstly, it may lead to high direct and indirect financial costs which may also lead to a decline in financial sustainability. This also implies a reduced possibility of institutional survival. Secondly, high academic staff turnover accelerates the decline in productivity, service rendering and standards as well as an increase in workflow disruptions. Additionally, Pienaar and Bester (2006) note that academic staff turnover leads to loss of experience and specialist knowledge, increases in administrative processes and a higher administrative workload.

Lastly, it leads to a decline in the image of the HEIs, and disruptions of the internal and informal social liaison and communication channels. In addition, high academic staff turnover leads to increased levels of job dissatisfaction among the remaining staff. Thus in order to ensure the smooth running of HEIs, these factors must be identified and dealt with, because they are harmful to the smooth operation of HEIs (Samariha et al, 2012). Although some researchers have attempted to answer the question of what determines an employee's intention to quit, to date there has been little consistency in the findings of the researchers. In the United Kingdom, for example, Metcalf, Rolfe, Stevens and Weale (2005:xvii) found that dissatisfaction with the work itself, relations with managers, being able to use one's own initiative, hours, relations with colleagues and physical work conditions affected the likelihood of academics leaving the HE sector. Metcalf et al. further found that having had a break in one's academic career, being on a non-permanent contract and being closer to the end of a fixed-term contract affected academics' decision to leave academia. Further the findings revealed that the number of hours that academics spent at work, the number of hours spent on administrative tasks and the fewer hours spent on research also encouraged academics to quit academia.

Lastly, Metcalf et al. (2005) found that the perception of excessive workload and belief in the unfairness of decisions affecting the individual's pay and promotion at his or her current university also affects the decision to leave the HE sector or to stay in it. According to Human Sciences Research Council (HRSC), the development and empowerment of workers, participation in decision-making and autonomy may prevent educators from leaving their work in South Africa (HRSC, 2005).

To curb the trend of educators leaving HEIs, Hunjra, Ali, Chain, Khan and Rehman (2010) suggest that employees should report their dissatisfying situation to management as job satisfaction and organisational commitment have been found to have the strongest and most direct influence on turnover intention of academic staff. For example, research by Igbaria and Greenhaus (1992) found that organisational commitment had a negative effect on turnover intentions while job satisfaction was found to have stronger effects on turnover intentions of employees. Low job satisfaction have also been found to contribute towards job dissatisfaction and increased staff turnover and absenteeism, both of which may ultimately affect the efficiency of organisations negatively (Klein, 2008).

Still within the South African background, Mapesela and Strydom (2004:2) argue that universities are losing experienced academic staff either to the corporate world or to better paying universities in Africa or abroad. They further add that the loss of senior and more experienced staff sets universities back in terms of their research outputs and on the quality of teaching. Dissatisfaction among academic staff also often leads to the intention to leave academia. Ultimately, this leads to actual high levels of turnover. The job satisfaction of university teachers (academics), their commitment and their retention are crucial to effective academic institutions (Eyupoglu & Saner, 2013:2818).

Mammen (2006:475) also adds that the decision to leave the HE sector is often due to low satisfaction with conditions of service. Hence, academics make an effort to move away from the institution, especially if they cannot see any efforts to rectify the situation. Therefore, (as shown in Chapter two) identities are not unitary and fixed (they may be constructed in the structure or the situation) but they are pluralistic and fluid (personal, role or group-based); hence, in the university context there exists different expectations and discourses concerning the roles, rights and obligations of academics and the nature and purpose of the institution (Winter, 2009:124). Since academic identities are constructed at the boundary between individual and organisational identities, it is important to simultaneously understand academics' individual and organisational identity as this allows a view of their identities as 'a balance at the boundary between individual and organisational identity' (Kreiner et al., 2006:1333).

To summarise, the above discussion has shown that academic identities are constructed from experiences, work behaviour, job satisfaction as well as organisational identification and commitment. Firstly, 'experiences' showed that academics encountered several job-related activities in their daily work that had a direct impact on how they perceived it and themselves. As such, experiences at work influence the kind of academic identity that they constructed. Secondly, 'work behaviour' revealed that the extent and/or manner in which academics perform their job depends on the work environment. Thirdly, 'job satisfaction' indicated that the attitudes that academics maintain towards their jobs are the result of diverse features of their job and experiences (both good and bad) resulting from their job environment. Lastly, 'organisational identification and commitment pointed out that one's decision to stay with or quit the university is the summation of experiences of job satisfaction and of the work environment. Overall, these factors highlight the view that academic identities are a source of '*meaning*' for the academics and their '*identification*' with the university.

3.5 The State of HE in Lesotho

Lesotho is a small, landlocked mountainous country with a total de jure population of two million, one hundred and seventy-three thousand, three hundred and ninety inhabitants (Country Meters, 2017). Although, Lesotho is a developing country, it has made enormous strides in its education sector from the pre-colonial era to the present. During pre-colonial times, education in Lesotho was informal and it was mainly the responsibility of the elders, the local leaders and the traditional doctors in the villages. Education was also the responsibility of the initiation schools that acted as informal institutions where learning took place. Boys and girls also separately learned cultural values and philosophy, personal and family responsibility and duties to one's clan and people (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). However, education styles changed with the deployment of the missionaries in the nineteenth century colonial period (Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013: Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). "As with many countries in Southern Africa, formal education in Lesotho was introduced and developed through

a partnership between the government and Christian missions” (Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013:4). The missionaries replaced the traditional way of learning. However, the main focus of education in those days was the acquisition of literacy so that the newly converted Christians could be able to read the Bible (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). Learning took place in the classroom when the French Protestant Christian missionaries arrived, in 1833.

In 1860, the arrival of the Roman Catholic missionaries brought a further expansion of formal schools. The early education pioneered by the missionaries became the standard form of education in Lesotho. Even after the setup of a formal colonial administration in 1868 to administer the acquired colony of Lesotho, formal education was left in the hands of the missionaries. However, colonial education was designed to spread Christian values. This is why the development and expansion of Christianity served the social interests of missionaries (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). Although there were some changes in the education system, they were minimal, even after independence in 1966 (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; Ansell, 2002).

The educational system was also still lacking in the betterment of the welfare of the Basotho nation; instead education and training were largely directed toward the limited opportunities for employment in government administration and in the churches, as teachers and catechists. There were also very few opportunities in trade and business. Opportunities were fewer in commercial agriculture. Moreover, knowledge of English and Arithmetic were the basic requirements for government work, hence school examinations strongly emphasised these skills and neglected the development of technical and commercial skills (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002).

By 1970, the switch from colonial government to post independence government education system still produced little change in the sphere of education because Lesotho had inherited the colonial education system and had since made little structural changes. Cognisant of this, the post-independence GoL then made plans to develop education into an instrument for development. However, these grand plans were faced with deficiencies in ideas and in the numbers of experts who could fulfil the aspirations of the government (Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002). Despite these limitations, “the GoL has made significant progress in increasing access to education, particularly at the basic-education level” (Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013:3). Presently, education in Lesotho has vastly improved with the literacy rates in Lesotho being among the highest on the continent. For example, an estimated 85% of the population aged 15 and above is literate in Lesotho, with the female adult literacy levels almost twice that of the Sub-Saharan African average (Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013:3). In fact, today Lesotho is among the few countries that can boast higher educational attainment and literacy among the females, as opposed to the males (Lesotho Vision 2020 Statement, 2002; Muzvidziwa & Seotsanyana, 2002; Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013).

These achievements were made possible by two things. Firstly, the pledge made in the GoL Vision 2020 Statement identified “education and training as one of the seven pillars of development” (Lesotho Vision 2020 Statement, 2002: viii) which “could contribute to accelerate the economic growth and alleviate and/or eradicate poverty” (CHE, 2010:4). Secondly, the GoL introduced the Free Primary Education (FPE) Program in the year 2000. This together with the repeal of the Education Act of 1995 made primary education not only free but also compulsory in 2010. As a result of the FPE, there has been a significant growth in both the net enrolment rate (NER) and the gross enrolment rate (GER). For example, the NER increased to from 60.2% in 1999 to 83.5% in 2006 (Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013:27).

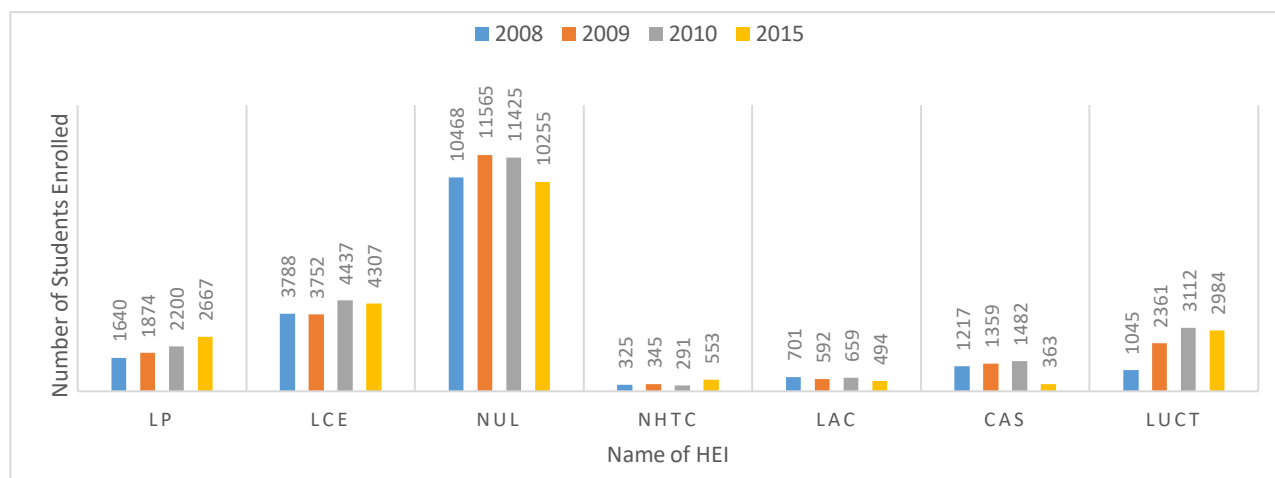
Currently the Lesotho education sector consists of four years of pre-primary education; seven years of primary education; five years of secondary education and three to six years of tertiary education. Post-secondary education has two main strands: HE and technical and vocational education and training (Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013; SARUA, 2012a). Due to its commitment to education, “Lesotho is [...] in an enviable position of being on track to achieve two significant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the specified year of 2015” (Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013:3). HE in Lesotho is also recognised as fundamental for the country’s development, with the availability of highly skilled manpower viewed as critical for promoting economic growth and poverty reduction (CHE, 2010:4; SARUA, 2012a:3).

The GoL recognises that appropriate and equitable HE and training to all Basotho is one of the most important contributory factors to Lesotho’s long-term socio-economic development (Ntho & Lesotho Council of NGOs, 2013: Lesotho Vision 2020 Statement, 2002). This is exemplified by the Lesotho HE Policy’s (2013:1) aim to ensure that Lesotho’s HE system “produces graduates with the knowledge, skills and values to contribute to the nation’s economic, social and cultural development, as well as with the capacity to address future challenges and exploit emerging opportunities”. Due to these concerns, the GoL bestows the largest portion of its annual national budget on HE. For example, in the 2011/2012 fiscal year, 590 million Maloti (approximately \$44,714,000), the largest recipient of the budget revenue, was allocated to the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS), a government organ responsible for Basotho national students’ HE loan bursaries (Central Bank of Lesotho, 2011).

The HE sector of Lesotho, under the sponsorship of the GoL, consists of eight public and private institutions. Among the public institutions there is NUL, the Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP), Lesotho College of Education (LCE), Lesotho Agricultural College (LAC) the National Health Training College (NHTC), the Institute of Development Management (IDM), the Lesotho Institute for Public Administration and Management (LIPAM) and the Centre for Accounting Studies (ACCA) (CHE, 2010). The private institutions are relatively small in number and include the newly established Limkokwing University of

Creative Technology (LUCT) and five nursing schools owned by the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL) namely, Maluti, Roma, Paray, Mapoteng and Scott schools of nursing (CHE, 2010:4). Figure 1 below shows the enrolment numbers of students in various HEIs in Lesotho from 2008 to 2015.

Figure 1: Bar chart of student enrolments in various HEIs in Lesotho 2008-2015



Source: Adapted from CHE (2010:8; 2015:8)

According to CHE (2011:ix) HE in Lesotho is offered through public institutions established by Acts of Parliament or those existing as government departments and private institutions with the majority owned by CHAL". Ntimo-Makara (in SARUA, 2012a) adds that the HE sector also relies on South African HEIs. However, CHE (2011) states that HEIs in Lesotho are less competitive internationally as they are only able to attract a small percentage of foreign staff and students. For example, the Lesotho HE Policy (2013:2) states that in the 2010/11 academic year, roughly twenty-six thousand five hundred Basotho were enrolled for studies in HEIs in Lesotho. A further two thousand four hundred students were studying at HEIs outside Lesotho and an unknown number of students were privately financing their own studies at both domestic and foreign institutions (Lesotho HE Policy, 2013). However, CHE (2010) states that the participation rate at HEIs in Lesotho is lower in comparison to the eligible population available for entry at this level. Additionally, the majority of students enrolled in HEIs in Lesotho were in undergraduate programmes while a few were at post graduate levels. Furthermore, programmes offered at HEIs in Lesotho led to different qualifications ranging from certificate to doctoral degrees (CHE, 2010).

Despite the enormous strides that the GoL has made in education, this sector remains plagued by many problems. According to Isaacs (2007), approximately 25% of the children whose families engage in subsistence farming in the rural areas do not attend school because their help is needed for their families to survive. Additionally, the costs of school attendance, uniforms and educational materials

such as books are unaffordable for many families, especially those suffering from family stress, poverty, HIV and AIDS and divorce. Ntho and Lesotho Council of NGOs (2013:6) add that GoL has made provision to increase equitable access, especially to primary schooling, by introducing special programmes for herd boys, by providing grants for schools that accept disadvantaged children, and by abolishing school fees. However, access to schooling at any level is constrained not only by fees, but also by other factors. In fact, there is evidence that the direct costs of schooling, such as tuition fees, are normally lower than the indirect costs, such as the cost of clothing and transport. The lack of school uniforms and of transport to and from school has been found to prevent both enrolment and effective participation in schools in Lesotho.

In terms of HE, Ansell (2002) argues that colonial HE in Lesotho neglected vocational training. This is partly due to many social misconceptions that vocational training does not equip students for more lucrative employment. Since Lesotho relies on external funding for its education sector, it has to conform to the global capitalist system in which it must seek to be competitive and to invest in economically productive areas. A 2005 report by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) exemplifies Ansell's (2002) view. It reveals that currently HEIs in Lesotho face a number of challenges which relate to funding and financing, poor governance, relevance of programmes to respond to economic needs, aligning to training more closely to job demands, encouraging the expansion of infrastructure and the need to solicit the private sector to participate and increase its commitment in the affairs of HEIs (MoET, 2005).

The Lesotho Vision 2020 Statement (2002) also adds that the education system in Lesotho is yet to fully respond to the needs of the country. It identifies key challenges in strengthening access to education further and in developing the curriculum that fully responds to the national development priorities, thus promoting technical and vocational skills. Moreover, Lesotho still has to develop an education system that is universal, free and compulsory to all, improve the current system of examinations in order to avoid potential anomalies and to build management capacity of the education institutions at all levels.

Nonetheless, the most significant challenge that faces HEIs in Lesotho is the consecutive industrial strike actions by academic staff in universities. According to CHE (2010) the main causes of strikes in HEIs in Lesotho range from problematic management styles, lack of resources for proper execution of duties, poor working conditions, poor packages to poor management strategies. For example, in 2011, NUL and LUCT Lesotho experienced prolonged strikes by academic staff (Lesotho Times, 2012a). Lesotho University Teachers and Researchers Union (LUTARU) at NUL complained of shortage of teaching aides, poor infrastructure such as internet connectivity, low wages and the salary gap between professors and other academic staff. They also demanded a 15% pay increase and an improvement in the working conditions of staff (Motsoeli, 2011). However, because of the NUL management's

reluctance to resolve these issues, LUTARU reported that it was left with no choice but to 'down the tools'. In a statement to the media, the ex-president of LUTARU said:

As LUTARU, we are always ready for negotiations to allow for the smooth-running of the university. Unfortunately, the management is refusing to talk to us; the authorities are ignoring us...It is therefore, clear the management is refusing to address our problems; the management does not even have to put it in black-and-white for us to see the reluctance. It is clear for everyone to see (Khanyela, 2012).

Disturbingly, however, LUTARU members stated that they were not going to bother to do the work that they did not do while the university was shut down because of the "no work, no pay" policy (Lesotho Times, 2012b). This, according to Mosooane (2012), is a very unfortunate situation which will invariably leave a colossal trail of damage on students' studies as the valuable school time that they lost would never be recovered. Similarly, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology Academic Staff Union (LUCTASU) also downed the tools for three months, from November 2011 to January 2012, in protest over issues concerning tenure, provident fund and other financial benefits, job security, high student-teacher ratios, poor pay and unsatisfactory working conditions. They also reported that they were being overworked and demanded the university management to decrease the hours of service and extend their period of personal loans repayment from three to ten months (Lesotho Times, 2012a).

The joint venture of educational formation between LUTARU and LUCTASU in full support of Lesotho Teachers Trade Union (LTTU) urged the Minister of Education and Training to withdraw the National University of Lesotho Amendment Bill (2011) on the grounds that it had elements of victimisation. LUTARU stated that the bill was advocating for the employment of highly skilled personnel such as professors and researchers and this was likely to destabilise security of tenure of the NUL (Lesotho Times, 2012b). LUTARU petitioned the Vice Chancellor to immediately stop the restructuring process at NUL and declared that if the Vice Chancellor did not solve the problems, they would organise a more serious strike that would shut down all school businesses and activities at NUL, LCE, LP, high schools and primary schools. Mosooane (2012) argues that although some of LUTARU's concerns were genuine, this did not give the members the right to disrupt classes just because their staff housing rentals had been increased, because they did not have enough laptops or they lacked the tools to teach. Instead, Mosooane believes the actions of LUTARU as holding students hostage, especially when they were about to write the first semester examinations. He further argues that:

It seems the lecturers at NUL are so blind they don't realise that by striking at this time they are playing poker with the educational wellbeing of future generations. It is

irresponsible to make students suffer simply because the university management and academic staff fail to resolve their problems (Mosooane, 2012:1).

The former Minister of Education and Training, also condemned the industrial action by LUTARU members. In a statement to the parliament, the minister said the GoL could not afford LUTARU's 25% wage demand because it was already grappling with economic recession. Additionally, it would not be proper for LUTARU to get a 15% raise when the government gave a 5% increase to all civil servants in the 2011 fiscal year (Zihlangu & Motsoeli, 2011). However, in January 2012 the management of NUL offered a 10% salary hike, with a promise to settle the residual 5% after six months. When the management failed to fulfil its promise, in July LUTARU resorted to another strike which the management declared unlawful (Ntsukunyane, 2012).

The grievances of academic staff at NUL and LUCT Lesotho are a clear indication of job dissatisfaction among academic staff in HEIs in Lesotho. They also confirm the findings of a study by Pii (2003) that institutional policies and practices, compensation, recognition, supervision, human relations and working conditions were some of the contributing factors towards the job dissatisfaction of academic staff in Lesotho's HEIs. Pii's (2003) results further indicated that poor management, non-participation in decision-making process, shortage of staff, lack of promotion and training opportunities, poor salaries, overcrowded classes, job insecurity, excessive workload and poor teaching materials were also significant contributors to the job dissatisfaction of staff in institutions of higher learning in Lesotho. Similar sentiments were uttered recently by the vice-chancellor, Professor Nqosa Mahao, at the 70th Anniversary celebrations of NUL. He said:

The working conditions for our staff are, by any comparative measure in the region, deplorable. These are compounded by poor facilities, unbearable teaching workloads and extremely low remuneration packages. All these, taken together do not lend themselves to high performance and they are primarily responsible for the university sliding in continental and global rankings. Our plea is that the question of public funding for the university and other public higher education institutions in the country needs a serious reflection if we are to invest wisely in the country's future (Mahao, 2015:14).

For universities to reverse the despondent outlook of their academic staff, they must pay attention to their primary sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This is because the problems in HEIs in Lesotho have the potentially crippling effect not only on this sector of Lesotho but also on the ability of Lesotho to produce qualified manpower to develop the country (CHE, 2011). This qualifies the statement made by Rosenstone (2004:1) that a strong educational system nurtures and sustains people's quality of life

and the cultural and economic health of communities. Consequently, HE systems should be strategically planned in order to produce the best results for all concerned (Awang & Ahmad, 2010).

3.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter it has been shown that identity refers to the meanings that academics attach reflexively to themselves through the processes of social interaction as they seek to address the question, 'who am I?' (Brown, 2014:23). Similarly, it was shown that academic identities derive from one's institution, discipline and personal interpretations of what an academic should be like. As such, academic identities not only represent academics' subjectively construed understandings of who they are, but they depict the multiple understandings of what an academic does and who an academic is (King & Billot, 2016:158).

Overall, this chapter emphasised the view that academics develop 'hybrid' academic identities due to their meaningful involvement in academe, research practice and the pressure to be outstanding disciplinary experts (Van Winkel et al., 2017:3). It also showed that the domain, community and practice, represent the three main spheres in the construction of academic identities. The domain allowed individuals who shared a passion for discipline (Ruuska & Vartiainen, 2003:172), the community helped academics to adopt 'embedded' identities and learn how to do their work better, (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1) while the practice allowed members to engaged and acknowledge each other as participants (Wenger, 1998:149).

Experiences within HEIs, work behaviour, job satisfaction and organisational commitment were also found to be determinants for academic self-concepts. Therefore this chapter highlighted the theoretical framework of this study by showing that academic identities may be constructed from interacting with others (the structure) or from the setting itself (the situation). It also showed that academic identities are pluralistic and fluid (personal, role or group based). Lastly, this chapter gave contextual information on the HE sector in Lesotho; it described the evolution of the education system in Lesotho from pre-colonial to recent times. It also outlined the strides that the GoL has attained in increasing access to higher education despite being plagued with problems ranging from problematic management styles to lack of resources for proper execution of duties, poor working conditions and poor packages.

The subsequent chapter presents the research methods that were used in answering the research study questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

As stated in chapter one, research focusing exclusively on academic identities has not fully and consistently centered on either the importance of work or the place of work in the context of identity-formation and practice (Kirk & Wall, 2011:77). Since academics do not just 'store' their work experiences but rather 'story' them (Badley, 2016:377), this research describes the narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic and their relationship to the construction of academic identities at NUL. Specifically, it examines reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to the membership of academics in disciplinary communities and the communities' influence on the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff. This study also shows how the (mis)alignment between job facets, individual values and expectations influence meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics' professional self-concepts. Lastly, this study describes stories of internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL and their influence on academic identity trajectories. Thus this study intends to answer the research study questions through the application of scientific procedures; it also seeks to describe and portray the work situation of academics at NUL accurately.

4.2 Methodological orientation

Similar to Potter (2015:18), my methodological starting point is that people's narratives are structurally, culturally and institutionally located; thus, it is only when they tell their stories that I (as a researcher) may say something about the social medium in which those stories take place. Since the stories of the meanings that academic staff attach to their work and its setting is under inquiry; the participants' stories are investigated from the symbolic interactionist perspectives on identity. They state that self is the subjective representation of others' responses to an individual as well as people's own definitions and interpretations (Stryker, 2008:18-19; Stets & Burke, 2003:4); thus the self is a multifaceted result of interactions with others (Farmer & Van Dyne, 2010:503). Interaction is also viewed as both contextual and situational while meanings are seen as emerging from continuous shared interactions (Carter & Fuller, 2015:1-2).

Accordingly, SIT and IT were chosen as the appropriate theoretical perspectives for this study since they explain exhaustively how individuals construct identities.

As part of the traditional symbolic interaction, SIT argues that identities depict the relationship between the individual and the other actors at a particular time (Owens et al. 2010:485); hence they are reflexive interpretations of the situation (MacKinnon, 1994:62). Conversely, IT (as part of structural symbolic interactionism) argues that individuals craft their identities from the networks of relationships in which they occupy positions and play roles (Stryker & Burke, 2000:5); from the distinctive idiosyncratic interpretations that they bring to their roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39; Stets, 2006:89) and from reflexive and symbolic interaction between themselves and others (Burke & Reitzes, 1981:84).

All research or inquiry is guided by a set of beliefs or worldviews known as paradigms (Killam, 2013:5). Guba and Lincoln (1994, in Bryman, 2008) define paradigms as basic belief systems derived from the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions; thus they are essentially a way of thinking about or viewing the world. In this case, ontology refers to what the researcher believes is 'true' or 'real' about a phenomenon; epistemology helps the researcher to acquire knowledge on the phenomenon while methodology refers to the specific systematic procedures used in knowledge discovery (Killam, 2013:5).

With regards to this study, the implication is that when answering the research study research questions, I have to ask myself three fundamental questions: (1) the *ontological* question: 'what is the nature of academic identities and what is there to be known about them?' (2) The *epistemological* question: 'what is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between me (the knower/researcher) and the academic staff (would-be known/participants)?' And (3) the *methodological* question: 'how can I go about obtaining the desired knowledge and understanding?' (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:8; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:22; Adams Collair, Oswald, & Perold, 2004:356). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016:8) the abovementioned questions pertain to the study's philosophical foundations or what I believe about the nature of reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology). They also shape the 'net' that contains premises or paradigms which influence how I see and act in the world as a researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:22).

In attempting to answer the study's philosophical foundations, I settled on the qualitative research as the study's research orientation. According to Creswell (2007:36) qualitative research involves a naturalistic approach to the world; it studies things in their natural setting where participants experience the issue or problem being studied. It emphasises participants' meanings and not what the researchers or the literature bring to the research (Creswell, 2007). Thus it permits an 'emic' or 'insider' perspective; it describes behaviour from the actor's point of view and is context-specific (Tracy, 2013). It offers a holistic account of the problem being investigated and attempts to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them (Creswell, 2007). It also considers reality as socially constructed (Brennen, 2017:4); thus it allows an in-depth examination and interpretation of

the phenomena which make the world visible (Creswell, 2007:36). Further, the qualitative approach emphasises attitudes, opinions and behaviour as well as people's lives and the social and cultural context that they live in (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:6). Lastly, qualitative research takes a holistic account of the phenomenon under study, identifies the varying factors and sketches the larger picture that emerges. Therefore rather than focusing on tight cause-and-effect relationships, this study focused on the complex symbolic interactions of the factors in the situation while being sensitive to the people and places under study (Creswell, 2007:36-37).

Among the known qualitative research approaches, the interpretive paradigm was chosen as this study's philosophical orientation because it sees human beings as unique; as they interact and live their daily lives, they continually create ideas, relationships, symbols and roles which they consider to be meaningful and significant. Thus the interpretive approach is important since it views social life as based on ideas, beliefs and perceptions that people hold (Neuman, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell, 2007; Adams et al., 2004). An interpretivist paradigm is also important since it views humans as born into history; thus they are embodied and embedded in a complex world. It also argues that humans construct reality by interpreting their perspectives on it; therefore knowledge is what people see, hear, feel, think, say and do (Morehouse, 2012:23).

Secondly, all the research questions of the study are '*how*' questions. Research that is set in the interpretivist research paradigm can answer questions about '*how*' or '*why*' something is happening or unfolds overtime (Cryer, 2006:78; Elliot & Timulak, 2005:149). Most importantly, the interpretive paradigm uses meanings-oriented methodologies that rely on the subjective relationship between the researcher and the subjects (Elliot & Timulak, 2005:149). Similarly, this study describes how narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities. Thus, it requires a research methodology that looks for verbal accounts, whose focus is driven by specific research questions and which empowers the participants to lead and point out important points of the phenomenon as they see it (Elliot & Timulak, 2005:149).

Since the qualitative-interpretive approach is concerned with individuals' subjective understanding of the world and acknowledges them as being valid and socially constructed (ontology) and allows researchers to understand other's experiences by interacting with or listening to their experiences (epistemology), a narrative research was found to be most applicable methodology for use with the interpretive paradigm; that is would help me answer the methodological question (how can I go about obtaining the desired knowledge and understanding?). According to Neuman (2007:54) the term '*narrative*' may either be used in terms of texts or discourse or within the context of qualitative research inquiry. Thus it can be both a phenomena and method. As a methodology, narrative research allows the researcher to study the lives of individuals and asks them to provide stories about their lives; thus it

focuses on the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals (Neuman, 2007). In this way, narrative research is excellent for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences (as well as information about the context of these stories) for a single individual or the lives on a small number of individuals.

Since this research seeks to focus on narratives used to construct academic identities, it will essentially be a *biographical study*. According to Neuman (2007:55) “a biographical study is a form of narrative study in which the researcher writes and records the experiences of another person’s life”. Narrative methodology also allows for ‘restorying’ (a process of reorganizing stories into some general type of framework). Often when individuals tell stories they tend not to present them in a chronological sequence. Restorying therefore allows the researcher to provide a causal link among ideas depicting past, present and future ideas (Neuman, 2007). In the end, the narrative combines views from the participant’s life with those of the researcher’s in a collaborative narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000 in Neuman, 2007).

4.2.1 Research design

Doing research involves choosing a research design that corresponds to the questions of the research study (Merriam, 2009); thus I acknowledge the importance of understanding participants’ stories of different work experiences and their influence in the construction of academic identities. Secondly, since individuals live ‘by’ and ‘in’ stories, who they are or are becoming is the result of the complex relationship between knowledge, context and identities (Clandinin, 2016:21-22). Based on this principle, this study set out to describe the construction of academic identities at NUL by focusing on one particular issue, relating stories and experiences to identity. Thus this research study required a shift from the measurement mode, to a more ‘narrative’ mode stressing the description and first-hand detail that offer an insight into the process of academic identity construction.

When deciding on the best ‘fit’ for this study, I decided on *narrative inquiry* as a research design based on four main reasons; firstly, “narrative inquiry is set in human stories of experience” (Webster & Mertova, 2007:1); thus it is based on the premise that human beings understand and give meaning to their lives through stories (Trahar, 2009; Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007; Clandinin, 2006). Secondly, narrative inquiry embraces narrative as both the method and phenomena of study (Pinnegar & Danes, 2007:4). Thirdly, narrative inquiry allows researchers to get an understanding of experience in people’s lives; it focuses on personal storytelling, thus it allows people to give meaning to themselves and the world at large. In this way, their stories represent the ways in which people choose to order and interpret their internal and external experiences (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Lastly, I chose narrative inquiry because it, similar to Jones (2011:109), would help me explore “some of the myriad influences on the

ways academics think about their lives as academics, their teaching and the ways they seek to make sense of their experience". As a qualitative research design, narrative inquiry not only focuses on the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences, but it seeks to understand why a story is constructed and the cultural discourses that it draws from (Trahar, 2009). Narrative inquiry is also a reflexive tool; it opens avenues for multiple interpretations. In this regard stories are both a mirror revealing the researcher and a window revealing participants. They open up the possibility of examining the relationship between the investigator and the participants; that is, narrative inquiry simultaneously allows academic identities to be understood from the perspective of academics and the researcher to examine own thinking in interpreting their stories (Jones, 2011:110). For example, Trahar (2009) states that in the gathering and telling of stories, people gather knowledge *from* the past and not necessarily knowledge *about* the past. Since memory is selective and tricky, narrative inquiry allows for retrospective understanding and assignation of meaning for past events.

According to McEwan and Egan (1995 in Webster & Mertova, 2007), narrative inquiry has two major contributions to research: firstly, it provides an account of the life journey and changes that have marked an individual's development; thus they represent the history of an individual's consciousness. Secondly, it records biographies, confessions, morals and beliefs, thus it is a powerful tool for tapping into the complexities of human social lives across a wide range of environments. Thus narrative inquiry is relational; it depicts relations between people and the social world, past, present and future, person and place as well as events and feelings (Clandinin, 2016:23).

Consequently, the use of narrative inquiry in this study is not only helpful for understanding the ever-changing nature of human identity, but it is an appropriate means for the construction of identities in cultural contexts over time and space. Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001:15) share this sentiment. They state that the type of construction used for an identity, cannot be separated from the type of identity being created; nor can it be isolated from the question of the cultural and historical context of its construction.

4.3 Participant selection

The principal objective of this narrative study was to describe the narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic and their influence on the construction of academic identities at NUL. This implies that I need to select a sample of individuals who have the capability to shed some light on what *being* an academic at NUL feels like. Essentially, this means that NUL academic staff, as a group, have specific characteristics about which I intend to draw conclusions (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005). Accordingly, they are the target population for the study; they comprised three hundred and seventy-four academic staff (one hundred and sixty-two females and two

hundred and twelve males) at NUL on the Roma Campus⁵. However, before recruiting the study participants, I demarcated the inclusive and exclusive criteria for participation in the study. For inclusion, a candidate had to be a full-time member of staff, regardless of nationality (foreign and national) in the ranks of lecturer, senior lecturer, associate professor and professor with at least a Master's degree. The exclusion criteria incorporated teaching assistants (with a Bachelor's degree) and all non-academic staff employed by NUL, as well as NUL management and students.

According to Holloway and Freshwater (2007:69) data collection may not commence if no participants have been chosen. Therefore the selection of study participants “inevitably raises the question as to the number of participants to include as sources of information” (Wells, 2011:19). In terms of selecting the participants for the qualitative research, Sandelowski (1995:183) emphasises the quality of information obtained per sampling unit as opposed to their number as of importance. This according to Wells (2011:20), is because the number of participants selected in narrative studies should relate to the study's purpose, extensiveness of the data collection effort and the richness of the data obtained.

Even so, Sandelowski (1995:183) contends that an adequate number of research participants in any qualitative research studies is one that permits deep case oriented analysis (by virtue of not being too large) and new and richly textured understanding of experience (by virtue of not being too small). Smith and Osborn (2007) concur and state that qualitative studies typically require small samples because they are committed to a painstaking analysis of cases rather than jumping to generalisations. Considering the above cited arguments, I decided that about thirty participants would be included in the sample for this study. This number was chosen because it was deemed sufficient to permit idiographic, holographic, naturalistic or analytic generalisations (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Sandelowski, 1995).

However, since computations cannot be done in qualitative research to determine a priori the minimum number and kinds of sampling units required, I continued collecting data from the participants until I felt that I had achieved data saturation (Sandelowski, 1995; Mack et al., 2005). I also attempted to ensure that the study participants would include participants from the different levels of the academic population at NUL. Therefore, I chose purposive (judgmental) sampling which samples individuals from a pre-specified group (Procter, Allan & Lacey, 2010:149). According to Macnee and McCabe (2008:122) and Merriam (2009:77) a purposively selected sample enriches data since it actively seeks participants who have a particular experience, characteristic or understanding to share which directly reflects the purpose of the study. Amongst the known types of purposive sampling, I chose *typical case sampling* which involves “selecting those cases that are the most typical, normal or representative of the group” (Teddlie

⁵ The NUL Head Statistician provided me with the current and updated number of academic staff on campus for the 2015/2016 academic year.

& Tashakkori, 2009:176). Thus when selecting participants I adhered to three guidelines: (1) candidates had to be knowledgeable about the situation or experience of being an academic at NUL, (2) candidates had to be willing to talk or be interviewed and (3) candidates had to be representative of the range of points of view (Engel & Schutt, 2010:96). Therefore I identified subgroups within the academic staff who represented the following groups; lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, professors. As I wanted to interview roughly thirty participants, I then decided that I would seek to have about eight participants per subgroup of those who were most accessible and typical of the group (Jha, 2014:203).

4.3.1 Negotiating access

Before conducting research at NUL, I wrote a letter to the Registrar and sought permission to conduct the study and permission was granted (see Addendum 3: Consent to conduct research at NUL). Recruitment of the study participants ensued late in 2015 while data collection spanned between January and April 2016. As a member of staff, I did not have trouble negotiating access to study academic identities at NUL. During the recruitment I visited potential study participants and told them about the study and its purpose. My access to research participants was through an introductory letter attached to the Registrar's letter giving permission to conduct research at NUL. I left potential participants with copies of this letter and they studied its contents at leisure.

At the time of the interview, I explained the purpose and goals of the research again. I also ensured that when explaining informed consent, the issues of confidentiality and anonymity were included; these helped me to create a rapport with the participants. Since the study was conducted in an institution of higher learning among academic professionals, I received a good reception. However, I struggled to reach the required sample size (although NUL has over three hundred and seventy academic staff on campus) as most potential participants could not find time to sit down for the interview. One male academic said: *"Just leave a copy of the questionnaire and I will fill it in"*.

I explained that this was a qualitative study and would require us to sit down and have a conversation. He then said: *"Eish...no I can't. I am so busy with the exams right now and after that I am teaching, so I can't help you. But there are others, let me call my head of department and you can talk to him about such issues"*. I stopped him and told him that I would approach individuals personally and I thanked him for his time, as participation in the study is voluntary. Nevertheless, even though I got the distinct impression that I was a bother to people, the question remained, 'how can people whose work involves research in one way or another, be so steadfastly against being part of research themselves? But I leave that for the line of inquiry for my subsequent research efforts. Still, some staff members agreed to participate in the study but I had to ensure that the interviews were conducted post-recruitment. I also had to adhere to the daily schedule of those who had agreed to participate, even though I had confirmed

their availability for interviews several times. Before conducting the interviews with the participants, I gave them a copy of the informed consent form and asked them to familiarise themselves with its contents. Most felt like this was a waste of time as they understood social research procedures. One issue I am most appreciative of is that the interviews could be conducted in the relative privacy of participants' offices. Some participants put out notices outside their doors indicating that a meeting was in progress while others told unexpected visitors that they were in a meeting. When the interviews were completed I got the sense that participants wished me to complete my PhD; most of them were surprised that I was pursuing it part-time and wished me well with this study. Some of them have even become my unofficial mentors and they still take time to inquire on the progress of the thesis months after the completion of interviews.

4.3.2 The research setting

NUL has its origin in the Pius XII College, a Catholic University College that was founded by the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of Southern Africa on April 8, 1945 on a provisional site at Roma. The purpose of the College was to offer African Catholic students with a post-matriculation and religious education. In 1946, the College moved to its permanent current site, and by 1959 the student population had increased from five to one hundred and seventy one. By 1963, the number of students had grown to one hundred and eighty as the necessary facilities had been added. From 1954 to 1964, Pius XII College was an "Associate College" of UNISA in Pretoria, a distance education institution that examined the students and offered degrees in Arts, Science, Commerce, and Education. In the early 1960s, as Apartheid legislation in South Africa became more restrictive, problems arose with regard to student residence requirements (Education Encyclopedia, 2012). Consequently an independent, non-denominational university was established by Royal Charter through the High Commission for Bechuanaland, Basutoland, and Swaziland.

On January 1, 1964, under a Charter granted by Queen Elizabeth II of England, the Pius XII College became an integral part of the independent, nondenominational University of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and Swaziland. The University was funded equally by the governments of all the three countries but the main campus was in Lesotho. There was no university presence in the other two countries, with the exception of the beginnings of the Faculty of Agriculture in Luyengo, Swaziland. In 1966, after independence was granted to the present day Botswana and Lesotho, the name was changed to the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, which offered its first degrees in 1967 in four-year programs in Humanities, Science, Social Sciences, Education and Law. The Law degree included two years of study at the University of Edinburgh (Education Encyclopedia, 2012). On October 20, 1975, the University was dissolved by the former Prime Minister of Lesotho, Leabua Jonathan, who then renamed it the National University of Lesotho. As it stands today, NUL falls under the patronage

of the NUL Council which directly reports to MoET (SARUA, 2012b). NUL's main campus is in Roma, about 35 kilometres south-east of Maseru. The University is situated on about 100 hectares of land and has other campuses in Maseru and other parts of Lesotho, including Leribe, Mohale's Hoek and Thaba-Tseka, functioning as the centres of the University's Institute of Extra-Mural Studies. The institutional focus of the University is teaching, research, and professional services (National University of Lesotho, 2007).

As the highest and largest academic institution in the country, "NUL's mission is to promote national advancement through innovative teaching, learning, research and professional services, producing high calibre and responsible graduates able to serve their communities with diligence" (SARUA, 2012b:8). NUL offers a wide range of programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the Faculties of Agriculture, Education, Health Sciences, Humanities, Law, Social Sciences, and Science and Technology. NUL also houses three institutes, the Institute of Education (IE) which undertakes research in education and offers in-service training for practicing teachers, the Institute of Extramural Studies (IEMS), which offers part-time diploma and degree programmes in adult education, business studies and mass communication, and Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS), which is a research centre for the University (CHE, 2010).

Today NUL offers degrees, certificates and diplomas in the faculties of Agriculture, Education, Humanities, Health Sciences, Law, Science and Social Sciences. Advanced degrees are also offered in the faculties of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences.

4.4 Narrative Interviews

This study mainly focuses on how narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL, thus narrative research is suitable since it focuses on the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals (Creswell, 2007:54). The methodological orientation of this research, qualitative inquiry, also focuses on meaning in context; therefore it requires a data collection instrument that is sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data (Merriam, 2009:2). It also requires that explanations account for actors' first-order constructs; thus interviews will be used as a research method. In any qualitative research, interviews are the primary way of collecting data. They are defined as conversations with a purpose of enhancing and extending knowledge about the individual(s) thoughts, feelings and other behaviour (Hancock, 2002). Since this study describes how narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL, the data was gathered using narrative interviews as a research method while a semi-structured interview guide was used as a data collection tool (See Appendix B: Interview Guide).

According to McAlpine et al. (2014:955) narratives are excellent for: (1) making connections between events, (2) displaying the influence of time on actions and (3) for demonstrating individual goals and intentions. They also add that narratives are inherently agentic and explicitly show the individuals' hopes and intentions as they navigate life and experiences (McAlpine et al., 2014:955). When defining narrative interviews, Edwards and Holland (2013:32) state that they are specifically designed to elicit 'own' story from the research participants. Similar to this study's methodological orientation, Edwards and Holland further state that narrative interviews originate from the interpretivist perspective; thus they are based "on the idea that people produce narratives about the self and identity through time that draw not only on their worn experiences and understanding, but on culturally circulating stories that help them interpret and make sense of the world and themselves in it" (2013:35). Thus narrative interviews are interpretive devices through which people represent themselves; that is people produce a relatively stable self and identity in their everyday world through an idea of their past, present and possible futures (Edwards & Holland, 2013:35).

Using interviews as a research method is also advantageous. Firstly, they are concerned with collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives and experiences (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995:1118). They are not only flexible in the ordering and scheduling of questions; but they also permit interviewees to answer the questions on their own terms. Moreover interviews provide some structure for comparison across interviewees in a study by covering the same topics, even in some instances using the same questions (Edwards & Holland, 2013: 29). In addition, interviews are designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic (Mack et al., 2005).

The interview situation also carries with it a unique intimacy shared by the interviewer and the participant; during the interviews, participants often reveal information that they would not discuss in a questionnaire about themselves. Hence it is important for the interviewer to appreciate the intimacy of the situation, and to plan their time during the interview to establish and maintain a rapport (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995:1118). During an interview, if the interviewee has some trouble answering a question or provides only a brief response, the interviewer has the freedom to probe the interviewee to elaborate on the original response or to follow a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee (Hancock, 2002:9).

For me the above discussion resonates Mey's (2007:59) two important characteristics of qualitative research: the principle of 'openness' and the principle of 'communication'. On the one hand, the principle of openness states that participants should be allowed to structure the research situation rather than being dominated by theoretical pre-assumptions. On the other hand, the principle of communication acknowledges the interaction between interviewers and interviewees as giving meaning to the elements being studied. However, interviews should be guided by a tentative interview schedule. The interviewer must also strike a proper balance between structure and flexibility (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995:1118).

This is done so that the interviewer can pre-plan the questions that the study participants are to be asked. An interview schedule therefore allows for a duplication of the interview with subsequent study participants. Even so, interviews depend on the interviewer's interviewing skills, and have been criticised for being notoriously time-intensive and prone to possible bias and misleading questions, I chose them as the study data collection technique because they allow for more detailed information than what other data collection methods such as surveys may provide. Standardisation of at least some of the questions also ensures consistency and the interviewer's ability to ask some spontaneous questions is sensitive to the participants' needs to express themselves. Lastly, interviews provide a more relaxed environment in which data collection may occur and the conversations that ensue also increase peoples' comfort levels than may be the case in a survey (Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000).

Moreover, using interviews as a data collection tool allowed me to play a dual-role of interviewer and data collection instrument; I used the responses of the participants to guide the data collection process, probing for further information as needed for depth and clarity. For example, when the data had been collected, it was in the form of transcribed recordings of interviews and the reflective notes made during the interviews. Therefore the transcripts and notes were the sources of data for this research (Pope et al., 2000).

4.5 Narrative analysis and interpretation

Qualitative analysis is defined as: the "non-numerical assessment of observations made through various qualitative research techniques" (Babbie, 2010:394). It is the process of resolving data into its constituent components to reveal its characteristic elements and structure with the aim of describing the objects or events to which the data refers" (Dey, 2005:31). Thus it depends largely on the purposes of the research and should be integrated from the start with other parts of the research, rather than being done as an afterthought. For Glesne (2006), qualitative data analysis is essentially a process of categorising, synthesising, searching for patterns and interpreting data. Since its data is full and rich, it is often difficult to find analytic paths through it, thus researchers must avoid being captivated by the richness of the data (Bryman, 2008:538).

Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber (1998:11) have a different opinion. They believe that narrative research does not require the replicability of results as a criterion for its evaluation. Instead the readers of the report need to rely more on the personal wisdom, skills and integrity of the researcher. However, data analysis in narrative research does not mean absolute freedom for speculation and intuition; rather, intuitive processes should be in the service of comprehension and should be tested against the narrative material. In other words the researcher must not make 'wild' interpretive decisions but should rather be justified by systematic inferential processes.

Given that the main research focus was on examining how narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities, when analysing the data I had to employ 'dialogical listening': (a) I had to listen carefully to the voice of the narrator as represented in the text; (b) I had to listen to the voice of the theoretical framework which provides the concepts and tools for interpretation and (c) I had to listen to my own voice in the act of reading and interpreting (Lieblich et al., 1998:10). I also paid special attention to both the form and content of their narratives as they were two important and main dimensions in the narrative analysis, (1) the holistic versus categorical approach and (2) the content versus form approach (Lieblich et al., 1998:12).

Firstly, the categorical approach may be adopted when the researcher is interested in a shared or collective problem; it analyses the story by dissecting it, and collecting sections or single words belonging to defined categories from the entire story or from several texts belonging to a number of narrators. In contrast, the holistic approach is preferred when the person as a whole is being studied since it focuses on a person's life story taken as a whole and interprets sections of the text in the context of other parts of the narrative (Lieblich et al., 1998:12). The second dimension, the distinction between the content and form of a story, focuses on the traditional dichotomy used in the literary reading of a text. In the content approach of a narrative, the focus is on the meanings, motives or images that the story symbolises from the tellers' perspective.

Conversely, the form approach focuses on the structure of the plot, the style, the choice of metaphors, the sequencing of events, complexity and coherence (Lieblich et al., 2012:12-13). Therefore this study adopted the categorical-content narrative analysis approach (known as the content analysis) since I am primarily interested in how meanings attached to distinctive and interpersonal experiences of work and its setting relate to the narratives of the construction of academic self-concepts at NUL; this is a phenomenon shared by academics as a group.

4.5.1 Data preparation and familiarisation

The first step of analysis in a qualitative study is data preparation and familiarisation (Tesch, 2013; Elliot & Timulak, 2005). In this case, I conducted a few interviews at a time and transcribed them as soon as they were completed because this allowed me to reflect on the quality of data, to refine the questions and to pursue emerging avenues of inquiry in further depth in subsequent interviews (Pope et al., 2000). In the 'initial' or primary analysis of the data and since the interviews were audio recorded, I listened to the conversations and transcribed everything that the participants said verbatim within two days of completion of each interview. Since the interviews were in English; this was appropriate and part of the *lingua franca* of the university. I also ensured that I typed all the literal statements and noted the non-verbal and para-linguistic communication of the interviewees from my field notes (Hycner, 1985).

When I was satisfied that I had reached data saturation since no new information transpired, I began to re-read the entire data set transcripts, paying closer attention to what the participants said (Tesch, 2013). I listened to and read each interview transcript several times for the non-verbal and para-linguistic levels of communication such as intonations, emphases and pauses for it was assumed that they might provide a context for the emergence of specific units of meaning and themes later on. I also read through each interview transcript to get a feel for what the participants had really said. When doing this, I approached the data with openness in order to allow for the interviewee's 'sense of the whole' to emerge from the data (Tesch, 2013). I also went through the data to get the participants' opinions in order to understand the meaning of what each respondent was saying, rather than what I expected the respondent to say.

4.5.2 Locating meaningful units

Next I started dividing the data into distinctive meaning units; in this case, these were parts of the data that communicated sufficient information to provide a piece of meaning to the reader (Elliot & Timulak, 2005:153). When analysing data using content analysis, meaningful units are in the form of utterances of the text and these units must be extracted, classified and gathered into categories or groups (Lieblich et al., 1998:13). This process is termed 'secondary' data analysis, whereby the researcher searches the interview transcripts to locate meaningful units (small bits of text) which, in this study, conveyed meaning independently (Babbie, 2010).

I immersed myself in the data, read, re-read and dwelt on it so that I could be close to it and have a sense of the whole interview. When I was satisfied that the text was familiar to me, I painstakingly delineated all the meaning units throughout the entire interview transcription and then decided which ones were relevant to the research questions. Meaning units according to Wertz (1985 cited in Tesch, 2013:93) are part of the "description whose phrases require each other to stand as a distinguishable moment".

I then broke down each transcript into small sections, describing what was said in each section. To ensure that my analysis was data driven, I identified key themes and issues in the text using two activities: (1) *Writing descriptive summaries* of what the participant said, what issues were identified, what events were relayed, what feelings were expressed and (2) *Making initial interpretations* - about what those issues, events and feelings might mean, that is, how they help me understand the experiences and perceptions of job satisfaction and motivation amongst academic staff at NUL.

4.5.3 Generation of categories

After locating meaningful units from the data I realised that different sets of meaning units describe different aspects of academic identities. I then restated the content or 'theme' of each meaning unit by summarising it into a more professional language. According to Tesch (2013), if any of the meaning units from one interview show similarities, they should be clustered together. To ensure that I got meaningful units, I went back and forth between the data and isolated the themes, dialoguing with the text in order to achieve the most revelatory wording of a theme. Next I ensured that I got general descriptions of the data by identifying the fundamental structure of the phenomenon, which I then used to describe the constituents of which the particular issue I was interested in comprised (Tesch, 2013).

I then categorised (coded) the meanings in the meaning units; that is, I interpreted the data and used labels close to the original language of the participants (Elliot & Timulak, 2005:154). I then integrated the identified sections that had a similar focus or content and then identified what appeared to be important and assigned that piece of information a name or a code. After I had coded all the data under these domains, I then arranged major code clumps into logical order by asking myself which clumps or parts belonged together in the final code arrangement in the manuscript (Glesne, 2006).

When coding the data, I started with open coding, whereby I labelled words or phrases that describe the research questions under investigation. I then divided the data into segments and scrutinised them for commonalities that could reflect categories or themes. Once the data was categorised, I examined it for properties that characterised each category and grouped similar comments together to form categories. I made connections between categories and selected the main categories of data, and then systematically related them to the other categories (Kleiman, 2004). I also ensured that the coding system that I had developed and used was comprehensive, accurate and useful enough to help me in describing and understanding the various descriptions of behaviour, statements, feelings, and thoughts of academic staff towards their understanding of work motivation and satisfaction (Pope et al., 2000).

The coding of data facilitated what Dey (2005) terms a 'thick' description of data which essentially includes information about the context of the phenomenon, how people understand it and its subsequent evolution into guiding their behaviour. Lastly, I developed themes. Themes are defined as abstract constructs that link expressions that are found in texts. When developing the themes, I ensured that they reflected either the overall experience, the structure of the experience, the function, the form or the mode or recurrence (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Elliot and Timulak (2005:153-154) also add that sorting data into domains or very broad headings for organising the data provides a conceptual framework for the data or axial coding. In this case, four main domains emerged; (1) good and bad work experiences; (2) community culture and participation; (3) job attitudes and (4) loyalty to NUL.

4.5.4 Demographic characteristics of NUL academics

Age, marital status, academic rank and the highest level of education were deemed important for the presentation of NUL academics' demographic characteristics (see Appendix C: Demographic Characteristics). At the time of the interviews, the ages of the academics ranged from twenty-eight to seventy-one years and the duration of employment from two years to forty-six years although one participant had been a part-time lecturer since 2012. The research participants were selected from the seven faculties of NUL but for privacy and anonymity purposes I decided not to indicate either the faculties or departments in the analysis. Of the thirty-one participants, twenty-five were locals, two were from Cameroon and two came from Zimbabwe, while one came from Ethiopia and another one from Kenya.

The demographic analysis also revealed that twenty-four participants were married, two were divorced while five were single. Almost all the participants had children with only two reporting that they had none while one was expecting a first child. Regarding the highest level of education, twenty-one participants had a Master's degree while ten had PhDs. In order to contextualise the experiences of being an academic at NUL, it was important that all academics be full-time teaching staff at NUL regardless of academic rank, although they could hold university service positions such as head of department, dean or tutor. I assumed that this mix of stories would let me get a sense of what being a junior academic versus a senior one was like; or what being a young, less experienced member of staff versus older and more experienced staff was like.

My initial interviews were hard to conduct as I was feeling apprehensive; participants often asked me to clarify what a particular question meant. For example, the question 'can you tell me about yourself?' was often met with puzzlement; with most participants considering it too broad. I soon learned to narrow it down into issues that I expected to hear from them and, with practice, I realised that the interviews were more like conversations. I realised that this also helped me to get the information I really wanted. During the interviews, I always began by asking participants to tell me about their family, education, and where they came from. However, for subsequent questions, there were times when I would begin asking the first question on my schedule, while at other times I mixed it up a bit. I found that this technique helped the participants who were a bit shy to come alive and talk more freely about their work. For example I found that the questions; 'What do you like/dislike most about your job?' and 'Have you ever thought of resigning from NUL?' were good for getting the conversation going.

Nevertheless one challenge was steering the conversation back to the interview. My experience was that once participants started talking about themselves and their work experiences they would invariably mix their responses with issues that were not related to the study especially those having to do with

politics, friends, colleagues, family and other issues. These issues were especially evident when analysing initial interviews; I realised that participants had answered very briefly what I had asked them, yet they had talked at length. For the subsequent interviews I ensured that I reined in some of the conversations in order to steer them in the direction that I was interested in. Ultimately, the stories that came later were of better quality and displayed the issues more appropriately.

4.6 Issues of authenticity and trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln (in Bryman, 2008) argue that qualitative studies should be judged or evaluated according to different criteria to quantitative studies; that is, qualitative data should be assessed using the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity. Krefting (1990) argues that when dealing with qualitative data, reliability and validity should be replaced with trustworthiness. This means that matters of validity in qualitative studies should be linked not to 'truth' or 'value' as they are for positivists. Rather they must be associated with 'trustworthiness', which becomes a matter of persuasion whereby the researcher is viewed as having made those practices visible and therefore auditable. Hence the reader of the research project should be able to track and verify the research process. Thus a qualitative study is trustworthy if and only if the reader of the research report judges it to be so (Pope et al., 2000).

When defining trustworthiness, Harrison, MacGibbon and Morton (2001) state that it refers to the ways in which the criteria of validity, credibility, and believability of social research, as assessed by the academy, communities, and participants are established. According to Lincoln and Guba (cited in Lietz, Langer & Furman, 2006) rigour and trustworthiness in qualitative research are established when the findings align closely and reflect the meanings as described by the participants. Conversely, trustworthiness is threatened when problems such as reactivity and biases on the part of the researcher and the participant arise.

Trustworthiness therefore involves establishing credibility (confidence in the truth of the findings), transferability (showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts), dependability (showing that the findings are consistent and could be repeated) and confirmability (a degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not the bias of the researcher, motivation or interest). In this study, I ensured trustworthiness of the data by employing strategies such as prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, member checking, negative case analysis, audit trail and reflexivity in order to describe the research findings in a way that authentically represents the meanings as described by the participants. I also ensured that the study was carried out ethically and the research findings were submitted back to the research participants so that they confirm that the researcher has correctly understood their perception of the social world. This technique is known as member or respondent validation (Lietz et al., 2006).

In terms of dependability, I adopted an auditing approach whereby complete records of the stages of the research process like problem formulation, selection of research participants, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts and data analysis decisions were kept in an accessible manner and sent to my supervisor. Additionally, I made sure that this research gave enough methodological details to enable the readers to understand what was done, thereby enabling them to make their own judgements about the quality and usefulness of the work (Fade, 2004). I also ensured that the study participants represented different viewpoints among the academic staff at NUL. This was facilitated by the sampling procedure of the study, which helped me to conduct the interviews with all the types of teaching staff including lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors and professors at NUL. I was also sensitive to social setting where the research was conducted by asking permission to conduct research. Further, I ensured that there was substantial engagement with study participants, and that the data collection process was transparent.

4.6.1 The researcher as insider

Issues of trustworthiness and authenticity also relate to the role played by the researcher in the field. As an academic/researcher/professional, my study examines how narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL. Since the research setting is my work place, this research is a 'practitioner research' (Rooney, 2005:3) and my role is an insider participant observer (Unluer, 2012); that is, I am both a member of a group being studied as well as the researcher studying it. According to Rooney (2005:5-6), studies where the researcher is an insider, clash with traditional notions of scientifically sound research where the researcher is an objective outsider (who studies external (to himself or to herself) subjects). In the cases which are similar to this study, where professionals carry out a study in their work setting, there is bound to be some degree of 'blurring of boundaries' which cause allegations of invalidity (Rooney, 2005:6) between the researcher and the researched.

The familiarity of being an insider-researcher is also criticised for leading to problems such as associated loss of objectivity and making wrong assumptions about the research process because of the researcher's prior knowledge of the group (Unluer, 2012). Insider-researchers may also be confronted with role duality and often struggle with finding a balance to their insider role (Unluer, 2012). For example, during the interviews I observed that participants said things such as '*as you know*' or '*I'm sure you know*' when explaining issues and this was due to the fact that I had explained who I was. I had the impression that they thought that they were talking to a kindred soul and, I must say, this contributed immensely to their frankness. Thus being an insider-researcher requires being aware of the possible effects of perceived bias on data collection and analysis as well as respect of ethical issues related to anonymity of individual participants. Even so, being an insider-researcher may be

advantageous; firstly, it helped me to get greater understanding of the culture and behaviour of NUL academics, something which I had previously not been aware of or thought was normal. Secondly, my presence as an insider-researcher had less chance of altering the flow of natural social interaction within the participants as a group. Lastly, my insider-researcher role 'established' intimacy which promoted both telling and judging the truth (Unluer, 2012:1).

Thus although it is permissible for the researcher to study a group that he or she is part of, the researcher must still take time and clearly explain to the readers of the research report how his or her role and relationship with the subjects is likely to compromise the authenticity and trustworthiness of the study. According to Rooney (2005:6), this can be done through explaining how the following issues were undertaken: (1) the impact of the researcher's relationship with the subject on normal behaviour, (2) the impact of implied knowledge on data interpretation, (3) the Impact of insider knowledge on missing the important information, (4) the impact of the researcher's hidden agendas and (4) the impact of the researcher's moral/political/cultural standpoints in the distortion of data (Rooney, 2005:6).

4.6.1.1 Impact of researcher's relationship with subject on normal behaviour

At the time of the interviews, NUL had three hundred and seventy-four academic staff, found in seven faculties. My own department, Sociology and Social Work, is one of the six departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences; this implies that I know only a select handful of colleagues in my faculty alone. From the onset, I made it a rule that I would not interview any members of my department. While conducting field work I also strived to maintain a degree of distance between myself and the participants; I also tried to interview the participants who were not in my immediate circle of colleagues as I believed this could potentially alter the responses that they gave me.

Luckily the study sampling strategy allowed this; thus I purposefully selected participants who were unknown to me as I believed that this would increase the objectivity of the study. Thus, by interviewing the subjects that were unfamiliar to me, or whom I recognised as members of staff from various meetings, I ensured that I minimised the impact of acquaintance in data collection. This strategy also helped me to ensure that I did not have an unnecessary influence on their normal behaviour during the interviews. In research terms this is often referred to as the Hawthorne Effect, after a classic set of management studies which found that workers responded differently when their work was being examined than when it was not. According to Babbie (2010:236), research participants tend to respond to the 'attention' given to them by researcher. This leads participants to respond to the social conditions of the data collection process itself rather than to the questions that the researcher required answers to (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2004:452). As a result, I had to be careful of the possible effects of the research itself on the participants (Babbie, 2010:236).

4.6.1.2 Impact of implied knowledge on data interpretation

The subject matter of this study 'academic identities' is relatively unknown in Lesotho; hence there was very little chance that I proceeded with data collection with some pre-conceptions of what I would find in the field. Secondly, since research of this kind has not been conducted in the Lesotho HE sector, I did not carry implied knowledge from empirical literature or from the findings with me into the field. Thirdly, since the participants were unknown to me personally, I did not have pre-existing ideas of their normal behaviour or actions at work; thus I took and analysed their data in an unbiased manner. The advantage of interpretive qualitative research is therefore visible in this regard, as it allowed the subjects to be in control of the research process. They were the ones whose subjective understandings of what being an academic at NUL felt like and I sought this from them. The literature and theoretical framework had a role in the kind of knowledge that I had regarding academic identities. However, this empirical knowledge could not determine the kind of data that I would get in the field although it could be used to discuss the findings. Accordingly, the study findings are unique to the sample of academics that I interviewed; Due to the nature of this study, the findings can, however, not be generalised to the entire population although they offer some insights into how academic identities may be constructed.

4.6.1.3 Impact of insider knowledge on missing important information

Since the participants were relatively unknown to me, I approached the interviews with an open mind, ready to hear stories of being an academic at NUL and I believe that this minimised any chance of missing important information. Secondly, since this study sought to find out some information on their work experiences and how academics feel about their work; the information sought from the participants was personal, but not necessarily 'hidden', 'privileged' or known only by the participants as part of a secret society who concealed information from non-members (see Appendix A: Informed Consent). As an insider, I did not seek to access information known to participants in the sense of insider 'jargon' or secret knowledge. I also used an interview schedule which ensured that I covered all the topics that I needed to cover (see Appendix B: Interview Guide).

Moreover, during the interviews, the interviewees and I took precautions such as putting our cell-phones on the silent mode so that our interviews would not be interrupted; when unexpected visitors interrupted the interviews I paused and noted what the participant had last said so that the interview could flow once more when resumed. Further, I did not have prior knowledge of the meanings that participants reflexively attribute to their work and the setting, therefore I did not have prior knowledge of any subject's work behaviour, future intentions or job attitudes.

4.6.1.4 Impact of researcher's hidden agendas

Through the office of the Registrar, the management of NUL was aware of this research activity; therefore I attached copies of the permission letter to all copies of the informed consent forms for the participants to be aware that this was not a hidden research study. I took time before the commencement of each interview to reiterate the intentions of this study; I supplied the participants with my supervisor's email and phone numbers, in case they wanted to validate the intentions of the study. Since this study was aimed at attaining a doctorate (an academic purpose), it did not have hidden agendas. As stated in chapter one, this study may illuminate a subject about which very little is known in Lesotho. I also wanted to give voice to the academics through their stories of what being an academic at NUL feels like.

4.6.1.5 Impact of researcher's values in the distortion of data

Sociology as the study of the development of structure and functioning of human society studies humans as emotional beings. As a human being, I have viewpoints on any social matter. Thus, it is impossible to completely dissociate my feelings in research that involves emotional beings. The methodological orientation of this study even allowed me to embrace others' values. Consequently, and as a subscriber to the 'value laden' sociological thought, I believe that sociology cannot be 'value free,' no matter how much it wants to be. As stated by Weber (1974), all the concepts are known through human subjectivity; thus there are no 'free'-of-human-subjectivity concepts to discover. Thus, social laws have no scientific justification in the cultural sciences (Letherby, Scott & Williams, 2013:64).

This is especially visible in the inspiration for this study which derived from my belief that work is good; it gives people status, identity and sense of worth. Thus it is important to me that people do work that fulfills them and allows or accommodates their uniqueness to be displayed. Hence my personal values and interactions with others at work led me to study the 'the significance of work and its setting for the workers well-being and sense of self'. My values had an essential role in guiding me to choose academic identities as an aspect of social life worthy of investigation (See Chapter one: Motivation for the study). Weber's (1974 cited in Letherby et al., 2013:64) statement that the desire and need to investigate social phenomena originates from individual commitments also highlights my argument. Weber also states that when studying social phenomena, social scientists should use two levels of analysis: (1) the cultural relevance of phenomena studied, and (2) the causal factors that lead to its significance.

However, Weber (1974 cited in Letherby et al., 2013:64) states that researchers should examine their value positions and their relationship to other concepts and principles during investigation. This implies that my values should help me choose a phenomenon of interest, however, they should not influence

how I go about examining and interpreting its manifestations. Therefore what is often described as Weber's 'value-free sociology' is not a sociology without values, but it is a sociology that begins with values although it is neutral in conduct and means of its subsequent investigation. Therefore, I as a sociologist and a researcher, I had the responsibility to balance the 'thin line' between valuing work as good and studying and interpreting its impact on academics as workers.

In summary, it has been shown that issues of authenticity and trustworthiness are critical to a study and the researcher has a moral obligation to separate her values from the meanings derived from the data. It has also been shown that the researcher as an insider poses some challenges to a study yet these can be overcome through his or her detailed self-reflection. However, I believe that a sufficient rapport was established to discuss issues pertaining to work experiences despite my role as an insider-researcher. In some cases I believe that this even contributed to me being able to obtain certain aspects of information that someone who was regarded as an outsider have found it difficult to obtain. Some participants got visibly agitated by some of the issues that they were talking about and I often got the feeling that some academics were frustrated with their work at NUL. Those who enjoyed their work were animated during the interviews and used elaborate hand gestures to explain issues.

4.7 Ethical considerations

"Research ethics deals primarily with the interaction between researchers and the people they study" (Mack et al, 2005:8). Since social science research investigates complex issues which involve cultural, legal, economic and political phenomena, it has long been concerned with ethical issues. Brennen (2017:16) adds that the active role of the researcher and an understanding that all inquiry is fundamentally subjective makes it necessary for qualitative researchers to use a variety of strategies to develop ethical ways of dealing with people that they encounter during the research process. This necessarily meant that I (as the researcher) had to concern myself with moral integrity in order to ensure that this study concerned itself with moral integrity and to ensure that the research process and the findings are trustworthy and valid. Ethical issues are becoming a crucial element in social research and may arise throughout the research process (British Sociological Association, 2002:1).

4.7.1 Confidentiality

"In recent years ethical considerations across the research community have come to the forefront. This is partly a consequence of legislative change in human rights and data protection, but also a result of increased public concern about the limits of inquiry" (Social Research Association, 2003:7). "All ethical guidelines for social researchers are clear that confidentiality is an important element of social research and that research participants should be made aware of who will have access to their data as well as

being provided with details about the processes of anonymisation” (Oliver in Wiles et al., 2006:5). Therefore, social scientists must attempt, at all times, to guarantee promises of confidentiality made to research participants, where possible (Corti et al, 2000). In fact, both guidelines and methods textbooks are unanimous that promises of confidentiality given to research participants by researchers must be kept. This is because confidentiality is integral to the societal beliefs that individuals have the right for their affairs to remain private (Wiles et al, 2006).

To assure research participants of the confidentiality of the information, I informed them that what we discussed during the interview would not be repeated without their permission (Wiles et al, 2006). During the interview or in casual conversation beforehand or afterward, I was careful not to make incidental comments about other people that have already been interviewed, as this behaviour might have suggested that I could not be trusted. Even when the participants asked what others had said, I tactfully declined to disclose any information about them. This was done to reassure them about my commitment to protecting confidentiality (Mack et al, 2005).

I also ensured confidentiality of data by: (1) Maintaining confidentiality of data/records and ensuring the separation of data from identifiable individuals and storing the code linking data to individuals securely. (2) Ensuring that only I and my promoter had the copies of the interview transcripts. (3) Not discussing the issues arising from an individual interview with other participants or individuals in ways that might identify an individual. (4) Not disclosing what an individual had said in an interview and anonymising individuals and/or places in the dissemination of the study to protect their identity and (5) stripping the data of any identifiers as soon after collection as possible (Linowes & Hoyman, 1982).

I also made sure that no identifiable information about the participants was disclosed and I tried to protect the identity of research participants through various processes designed to anonymise them by giving them fake names (Wiles et al. 2006). After the completion of research study, I also made sure that participants had access to the information that was used in the research. By sending them copies of the transcripts, I ensured that the study participants were able to find out what individually identifiable information about them had been made.

4.7.2 Informed consent

Gaining informed consent from people being researched is central to ethical research practice (Wiles et al., 2005) as “there can be no deception regarding the motives of the research” (Brennen, 2017:16). Informed consent is thus an instrument for ensuring that people understand what it means to participate in a particular research study so they can decide in a conscious, deliberate way whether they want to participate in that study or not (Mac et al, 2005) without any psychological or physical pressure,

manipulation or coercion (Brennen, 2017:16). Mac et al. (2005:9) add that informed consent is “a form... that describes in detail what the research is about, including the risks and benefits. It is one of the most important tools for ensuring respect for persons during research”. In this light, informed consent is a necessity in social research because participants “should be made aware of their right to refuse participation whenever and for whatever reason they wish” (British Sociological Association, 2002:3).

As far as possible, I ensured that participation in this research study was based on the freely given informed consent of the research participants (British Sociological Association, 2002; Corti et al., 2000). Article 16 of the Statement of Ethical Practice for The British Sociological Association (2002:3) states that ethical research “implies a responsibility on the sociologists to explain in appropriate detail, and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken, and how it is to be disseminated and used”. Therefore, “the central argument for obtaining consent from participants is that research is liable to be intrusive, and intrusion is only legitimate if consent is obtained... [and] research which intrudes into the private space of the individual, without that person’s consent, breaches that person’s rights” (Spicker, 2007:1).

Spicker (2007:2) further says that informed consent applies to more than research participants: it covers anyone who is the subject of research, not just those who are delivering the information. It also applies not just to what a person reveals but also to anything that might be discovered about them. Therefore, particular care may need to be taken during the periods of prolonged fieldwork where it is easy for research participants to forget that they are being studied (British Sociological Association, 2002:3). This further implies accountability of researchers to explain fully and meaningfully what the research is about and how the findings will be disseminated. It also means that researchers have the obligation to ensure that at all times participants are conscious of their right to decline participating in social research, understand the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained, and are aware of the potential uses to which the data might be put and, in some cases, be reminded of their right to re-negotiate consent (Corti et al., 2000).

According to Spicker (2007:3-4) there are two main objections to obtaining consent. Firstly, obtaining consent is a practical objective: there are contexts in which it is neither feasible nor desirable to obtain voluntary consent from the people being studied. Observing a crowd at a football match, or watching drivers in moving cars cannot generally be done with the consent of all the participants. The idea that consent ought to be obtained poses a major obstacle to the prospect of research being done at all. Secondly, consent is obtained for methodological objective. It is one of the most basic truisms of the social research method because the methods used and even the presence of a researcher, may alter the behaviour of research subjects (see 4.6.1.1: Impact of researcher’s relationship with subject on normal behaviour). Wiles et al. (2005:7) add that inasmuch as informed consent may appear to be a

relatively straightforward issue, it aims to give people information to enable them to make informed decisions about participation in social research. A closer inspection reveals that the process is more complicated as the notion of true informed consent, where participants are given a full description and are able to reach a clear understanding of what participation involves mostly exists more in theory than in reality. Corti et al. (2000) are of a similar view and add that the extent to which participants can ever be fully informed is disputed.

Wiles et al. (2005) also argue that due to the tension between the participant's right to refuse and the motivation of the researcher to achieve a high response rate, researchers sometimes use various strategies at their disposal, including providing less than full information and incentives to participants in order to encourage participation. Although researchers clearly need to provide sufficient information to enable participants to make informed decisions about participation, researchers are advised to avoid providing information in such a way that it might put people off participating (Wiles et al, 2005).

Moreover, even though explaining the details and intentions of the study is a prerequisite before entering into fieldwork, researchers should never assume that all study participants have a detailed appreciation of the nature and aims of academic research (Corti et al. 2000). In this study, I ensured that before I started interviewing the participants that I informed them of their right to decline or accept to participate in the study. I also requested them to sign informed consent forms before the start of interviews, mainly as proof that each respondent fully agreed to participate in the study and would be audio recorded (see Appendix A: Informed Consent).

I specifically ensured that I told them about the purpose of the study, what was expected of them as research participants, including the length of time that was likely to be required for their participation. Additionally, I explained the expected risks and benefits of participating in the study as well as ensuring that every participant was aware that he or she had the right to voluntarily participate or withdraw at any time with no negative repercussions (Brennen, 2017:16). Moreover, I explained to the participants how their confidentiality would be protected and ensured that my name and contact information as the investigator were given to the participants for questions or problems related to the research (Mack et al., 2005).

4.7.3 No harm to participants

Article 10 of the Statement of Ethical Practice for The British Sociological Association (2002:2) states that "sociologists, when they carry out research, enter into personal and moral relationships with those they study, be they individuals, households, social groups or corporate entities". In addition, Article 13 states that "sociologists have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-

being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research. They should strive to protect the rights of those they study, their interests, sensitivities and privacy, while recognising the difficulty of balancing potentially conflicting interests” (British Sociological Association, 2002:2). Mack et al (2005) further argue that the well-being of participants is always paramount. This means that if a choice has to be made between doing harm to the participant and doing harm to the research, it is the research that is sacrificed not the research participants.

In this research, I observed the ethics of respect for persons, beneficence and justice. According to Mack et al. (2005:9) “respect for persons requires a commitment to ensuring the autonomy of research participants, and, where autonomy may be diminished, to protect people from exploitation of their vulnerability.” Lastly, the ethic of “beneficence requires a commitment to minimising the risks associated with research, including psychological and social risks, and maximising the benefits that accrue to research participants” (Mack et al, 2005:9). Mack et al (2005:9) further adds that the ethic of “justice requires a commitment to ensuring a fair distribution of the risks and benefits resulting from research”.

4.7.4 UNISA Ethics Committee

The research proposal for this study was presented before the Department of Sociology Ethical Committee on the 07th August 2012 and was given ethical clearance by this committee, prior to any fieldwork being undertaken (See Addendums 1 and 2).

4.8 Limitations of the study

This study involved ‘academic identity’ a research topic relatively unheard of (even among academics as participants) meant that participants were enthused and intrigued by it. Although they did not have an idea of the concept itself, they immediately could relate to its aspects under investigation. Even so, it is impossible for this study to provide answers related to academic staff issues at NUL specifically and the Lesotho HE sector generally, since it has some limitations in scope and design, as discussed briefly below.

4.8.1 Academic staff viewpoints

In this study only academics at NUL as the largest and oldest HEI in Lesotho were investigated, thus the viewpoints of other academic staff from other HEIs in Lesotho were excluded. At first, I planned to include other HEIs in the sample; however I soon discovered that they did not have similar academic ranks/profiles as those at NUL. Thus comparative analysis would not have been possible. Still this is a limitation as, invariably, this study is NUL ‘centric’. Another study limitation relates to the fact that issues

of gender, especially as it relates to academic identity, were not explored. Since this study aimed to lay the ground work on how experiences of 'being' an academic related to the construction of academic identities at NUL, gender (although important) was side-lined for future research endeavours, utilising other research methodologies and designs on samples allowing comparative analysis⁶. The participants' views on different aspects of their jobs as academics were given, but there was no way of controlling for personal biases in the narratives. For example it could be that on the day of the interview a participant was having a particularly good or bad day, thus his or her stories were informed by those personal circumstances. Further, language was not a barrier for the expression of viewpoints in this study since all the participants were able to express themselves fluently in English. As such the data was interpreted without destroying its complexity and content; allowing for complete and detailed description of the construction of academic identities. Nevertheless, there are some ambiguities in the data; I attempted to clarify these especially when participants pointed at something in the office or referred to something they had already talked about.

4.8.2 Methodological design

The methodological limitations of this study were two-fold. Firstly, this was a cross-sectional study of NUL academics' identities. It involved observations of a phenomenon or sample at one point in time (Babbie, 2010:106). The concern was that, due to the limitations of memory over-time and the tendency to remember significant events, the final interpretation of work experiences might be incomplete. This is especially possible for participants who had many years of academic experience at NUL as there may have been many more work experiences that they did not share in this study. However, unlike other cross-sectional studies which consider only present events and disregard past and future intentions, the study considered how the academic staff feeling about their jobs in the past, in the present and in the future affected self-concepts. This for me is a strong point.

Secondly, since this study collected information from a non-probability sample, its results may not be generalised to the entire population of academics in HEIs in Lesotho. As a member of staff and a researcher, possible influence of my presence on the participants' responses cannot be overruled. Despite these limitations, the findings of the study provide some insights into the influence of work and its setting on academic identities through the lens of academic staff.

⁶ Gender is an important aspect in identity construction. Incorporating it in future research could allow the exploration of the gendered nature of academic identities derived from the ground-work this study would have provided on factors influencing academic identities in Lesotho.

4.10 Chapter summary

This study is qualitative in nature. It empirically investigated the world of academics from their viewpoint and within their natural settings. Narrative inquiry was chosen as the appropriate research design for this study because it seeks to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon by peeling back the various layers of moral, ethical, social and cultural influence that a person encounters in the social world. Since the researcher was interested in studying the academic staff at NUL, it and its academic staff became the research setting and target population respectively by default. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and were interviewed using an interview schedule. The data was analysed by transcribing interview audio tapes and resolving data into its constituent components in order to reveal its characteristic elements and structure, with the aim of describing the objects or events to which the data refers. Regarding ethics, I ensured that participation was freely given with informed consent.

The next chapter concentrates on how the narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS: 'WHO AM I?' CHRONICLES OF WORKING AS AN ACADEMIC AT NUL

5.1 Introduction

Identities define who one is as an occupant of a role (role identity), a member of a particular group (social identity) or claims particular characteristics that identify one as a unique individual (person identity). Individuals have multiple identities related to all three types of identities (Crow & Paredes-Scribner, 2014:295; Oyserman et al., 2012:69). Thus, any sociological approach to identity should start with the supposition that a mutual relationship exists between the self and social groups (Stets & Burke, 2009:1; James, 2006:7). Symbolic interactionism (the theoretical framework of the study) states that the construction of identities is based on the situation (context) and social relations (structure). Consequently, this study is based on the premise that academic identities are derived from meanings derived from the situation and relations; they are developed and sustained by academics as they seek to address the question, 'who am I?' (Brown, 2014:23).

Therefore this chapter focuses on how academics at NUL create academic identities that represent how they would like to view themselves (Burke & Stets, 2009:39) within their everyday realities (Clarke et al., 2013). That is, how academics construct identities that are idiosyncratic interpretations of their various roles at work (Burke & Stets, 2009:39; Stets, 2006:89) and are reflective of their life histories and individual commitments (Vandeyar, 2010) or *how do the narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL?* Here the study shows that academic identities are interwoven into the essence of being for academics (Vandeyar, 2010:916).

Since academic identities are not fixed or stable but are informed by attitudes, knowledge, discipline and other life domains from which academics draw their experiences (James, 2006:7), it will be shown that they represent academics' subjectively construed understandings of 'who' they are, were in the past or desire to be in the future (Brown, 2014:20). As such, this chapter highlights the fact that academic identities involve seeing oneself as a unique and distinct individual, different from others (Hogg, 2006:115). Since identities are endowed with the capacity to affect an individual's perceptual processes (Stryker, 2008:20), the feelings and significance that academics attribute to their jobs are also explored as they show that only academics have the experiential knowledge of what being an academic feels like.

5.2 Academic Identity as Lived Work Experiences

Identity is essentially a 'label' used by people to differentiate and incorporate their sense of self into different social and personal dimensions (Bamberg, 2010:4); as such an identity as nothing more than people's image of themselves and their place in the world (Moore, 2001:82). McAdams (1999:486) adds that an identity is the internalised and evolving story that results from a person's selective appropriation of the past, present and future. Thus, identity is created by the combined influences of the social context and personal attributes (Kram et al., 2012:305). Similarly, academic identities are a consequence of social relations which academics participate in (Oyserman et al., 2012:77), thus they are structural.

The narrative understanding of lived experiences involves not only involves arranging selected past, present and future elements into meaningful stories, but it offers interpretations of life, perceptions and choices (Jonsson, Josephsson & Kielhofner, 2001:425). I have already noted Wenger's (1998) understanding of identity as 'lived experience' where he argued that identity is more than a category, label, trait or role but rather an experience of participation. Rather it is 'fundamentally an experience that involves both participation and reification' (Wenger, 1998:163). Essentially this implies daily interaction with others within and outside disciplinary communities at NUL not only creates relationships that define 'who' one is as an academic, but it also gives one specific meanings through engagement with others at NUL.

Therefore stories can provide insights into how academics develop self-concepts derived from interpreting their work, its setting and the meanings they attribute to themselves as they perform their roles. Accordingly, the key theme '*Academic Identity as Lived Work Experiences*' highlights the social construction of academic identities. It also shows that academic identities derive from academics' biographies of everyday life at work, actual life experiences and cultural history (Cote & Levine, 2015:27). Furthermore, the key theme shows that academic identities derive from academics' entire thoughts, feelings, self-evaluations and imaginations of who they are; thus they represent self-meanings based on 'observations, inferences, wishes, desires and how others act toward them' (Stets & Burke, 2003:5).

In this way, academics as individuals "have as many identities as distinct networks of relationships in which they occupy positions and play roles" (Stryker & Burke, 2000:5). Thus the key theme '*Academic Identity as Lived Work Experiences*' represents the pragmatic and situated nature of academic identities (Oyserman et al., 2012:70). Its subthemes include: enjoyment, applicability, exploitation, facilitation, multitasking, prestige and burn-out.

5.2.1 Enjoyment

The findings revealed that all the participants who experienced 'enjoyment' in their work identified with their teaching roles as academics, thus they viewed teaching as inextricably interwoven into their very essence as individuals. From this view, it could be said that narratives of enjoying teaching not only contribute to self-meanings but they also lead to increased feelings of authenticity (Burke & Stets, 2009:125) which enables participants to be who they really are. For that reason, the academic identity thus constructed is one of a '*passionate teacher*'. Using this identity construction, academics make sense of their work from an optimistic angle. The core feature of their identities is 'work enjoyment'; thus, enjoying teaching reinforces and represents who academics are, their commitments and values' (Vandeyar, 2010:916); it is also an essential ingredient of 'who' participants are; as such they cannot just "put on" and "take off" their teaching roles as they might "take on" and then "exit" others (Burke & Stets, 2009:125). This sentiment is echoed by Hillary who states that teaching is a passion derived from a lifelong career in teaching:

I have always been a qualified trained teacher. I developed a passion for teaching at primary school and high school level. I have been trained very well for those, and I have always been a teacher, and I have always liked teaching. You know the classroom... which is where I really like to be. I like teaching and everything that goes with it. Still I see that students are not prepared as far as my field is concerned. English is their second language and they are not ready for university work in English. When I see that students are not catching what I am saying, it's like I could get into them and make them understand as I would like them to.

Hillary's narrative underlines the findings of Feather (2012) who found that lecturers perceived their primary role to be that of a teacher. As shown in her narrative, Hillary entered the NUL setting with portions of her identity as a teacher and culturally formed summaries of being a teacher already established (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:273). Therefore she uses her professional and personal traits as a frame of reference for self-evaluation (Brickson & Brewer, 2001:50-51). Interacting with students in class not only creates meaning for her identity as an academic, but it also represents who she is. Hence liking '*teaching and everything that goes with it*' is part of her self-image which she brings into her work situations (Stes & Burke, 2003:5). However, it seems that past experiences of students not being fully equipped to handle tertiary level studies retracts some enjoyment from teaching for Hillary. This is exemplified by the use of the metaphor '*it's like I could get into them*' in her narrative. For me, this imagining illustrates 'experienced powerlessness' in Hillary's work and its setting. Although she realises that factors external to herself and NUL contribute to the calibre of the students that she teaches, as a trained and qualified teacher she still feels helpless to correct perceived and experienced learning deficiencies in her students. Consequently she perceives her inability to control learning (as well as she

can teaching), as a failure on her part as a teacher. This confirms Clarke et al.'s (2013:9) view that individuals embrace identities created during socialisation experiences. A similar observation is made for Amos; he was also a professional teacher. Before joining NUL he had worked at various secondary schools, first as a teacher and later as a school principal. Thus the values of teaching (which were instilled in him during professional training) defined Amos' identity as an academic. As a result, teaching is central to who he is as an academic: *"You know I have been a teacher all my life... I like having an interaction with my students in class. Teaching is in my blood; even when I am angry...demotivated by other things, when I get to class, you would not believe it...I leave my frustrations in my office. That's it... that's it really"*. Amos' narrative resonates Snyder and Wenger's (2010:110) view that specific domains reflect the passion that its members have for their domain and this becomes a deep part of their personal identity and a means to express what their life's work is all about. Thus Amos' deep enjoyment of teaching has a therapeutic effect on him since it is informed by his domain's shared competence, interest and commitment (Ruuska & Vartiainen, 2003:172).

Secondly, the use of the metaphor '*teaching is in my blood*' shows that narratives allow alternative descriptions, understandings and descriptions of ideas (Blunden, 2010:35). Thus it helps Amos to transform experience into meaning; it also situates his teaching experiences and provides a "more plausible, convincing and adaptable model" of Amos' world (Blunden, 2010:35). Besides passion, job dedication was found to render academics' work meaningful and thus it influences the construction of academic identities. This is illustrated in narration by Michael:

Lecturing for me is a passion. It's something which I like doing. So the lecturing exercise for me has always been my passion, something I like. I am intrinsically motivated to do what I am supposed to do, and even to sacrifice and go beyond that extra mile... I will do it, no problem.

For Michael it seems that experiences of intrinsic enjoyment of his work influences the construction of an academic identity. Another element which influences Michael's academic identity is found in his use of the metaphor '*go beyond that extra mile*'; Michael's use of this metaphor depicting movement or distance shows that besides his conventional role as an academic, he views himself as being devoted to his work as a lecturer. This confirms Clarke et al.'s (2013:7) view that academic identities relate to teaching and research activities that are subject or discipline-based (Clarke, Hyde & Drennan, 2013:7). It also highlights Vandeyar's (2010:916) view that academic identities are personal and reveal the life history of the academic; hence they are indivisibly intertwined into the very essence of the being of the academic. Edith's narrative echoes Michael's sentiments: *"Mainly I teach courses in nutrition. I must say I am a very passionate nutritionist, nutrition is my passion and I have seen the benefits of nutrition and it is something that I want to instil in students that we teach"*. Here it seems Edith uses the perceived

and experienced benefits and passion for her field of study as symbols to create meaning for her identity as an academic. This confirms Henkel's (2000) assertion that domains depict academics as 'distinctive individuals', with unique histories, chosen moral and conceptual frameworks and who identify within a defined community or institution by the goods they have achieved. Hence passion for nutrition is a symbol which Edith uses to indicate the expectations and meanings behind her actions (Elliot & Lemert, 2014:90). Secondly, her need 'to instil in students' her discipline's core values also shows the commitment and dedication she has for her job. It could therefore be said that Edith not only enjoys teaching, but she enjoys motivating her students to have the kind of 'passion' that she has for nutrition. The intrinsic quality of teaching also seems to be indivisibly linked with who academics are as individuals, as stated by Alden:

Teaching is what I enjoy the most. When I wake up in the morning at 5:30 am, it's all smiles. When I get to class at 7 a.m. and I am teaching. At the end of the day, I tell myself that I have done good work. I always evaluate my work, and see whether I am making progress as a teacher and whether my students make progress...so I measure myself. If the students are passing then it's all good, if they are failing then it's back to the drawing board. I remember one year my course did not do so well and in Senate⁷ they almost killed me...why are students failing like this? I was so depressed that time. I even entertained thoughts that maybe I should resign. But someone made me aware that it was because students were sometimes just not good. He said to me 'look maybe this year you had a bad batch that's all'. I felt better when I compared their results with others who had passed and I let it go. I teach the same things, so I could not say that this time I had made some major changes and the course was more difficult. But I said 'what I can do to make sure that this does not happen again?' So next time when I see that 'oh they are failing', I always come up with remedial actions. That seems to work now.

From this narrative, Alden experiences work engagement and a sense of obligation to his work. This is exemplified by his ability to engage in self-appraisal regarding the quality of his work as exemplified in his use of the metaphor '*I measure myself*'. The metaphor not only shows that self-reflection is critical for who Alden is at work but it also shows that his academic identity integrates the past and the future in the negotiation of the present (Wenger 1998:74). It also seems like Alden values diligence in his work as an academic, thus the need to (re)examine his work is an active contribution to his identity as an academic (Korsgaard, Cohen, Geuss, Nagel, Williams & O'Neill, 1996:239-40). For that reason, Alden's academic identity does not simply depend on the relations between him and his students but also on

⁷ Senate in a university body made up of middle and top management which deals with various issues relating to teaching and learning at NUL such as examination results. Annually before results are published they are presented to and discussed in Senate. They are presented by Deans to Senate on behalf of their respective faculties.

his will as an individual (Gowans, 2002:553). Alden also finds his authentic academic self by displaying consistency between his core beliefs and behaviours that he exhibits at work; thus Alden's need to 'always evaluate' his work represents his effort to stay true to his 'real' self (Brown, 2014:29). Similarly, Elizabeth displays commitment and engagement in her work; however unlike Alden, the initiative displayed in her work stems from the need to create memorable learning experiences for her students as evidenced by her comment:

Teaching is my thing...I enjoy interacting with students absolutely. I enjoy creating things beyond the syllabus and making sure that I employ other teaching methods... like thinking out of the box. Sometimes here at NUL, it's like we are given a teaching manual. It's class, test assignment for everyone. I said 'not for me'. For instance the seminar I do with 5th years is not part of the syllabus. So creating an environment for students that makes their training fun... that is something I enjoy".

From the onset, Elizabeth's narrative shows that she constructs her academic identity from her 'moral standpoint'. That is, Elizabeth's academic identity is defined by her values (Taylor, 1989:27). She also seems to experience the ownership of teaching and learning in her work which confirms Adams' (2000:66) view that historically academics have had some freedom in deciding on taught content but in demonstrating expertise within their discipline. Thus being innovative at work not only represents the core values for Elizabeth's identity as an academic but it also represents a felt obligation to her work and students. Thus creating things beyond the syllabus not only represents identity work to maintain and strengthen coherent and distinctive personal and role identities, but it represents Elizabeth's professional autonomy, status and identity as an academic (Winter, 2009:123).

Likewise, it could be said that Elizabeth creates things beyond the syllabus to remain competitive and to ensure that her particular interests are accorded recognition and value within her academic domain; thus engagement in extra-curricular activities is her academic 'capital' to ensure that she gains 'profits' such as being recognised, competitive, pertinent and effective within her field (Archer, 2008:386). Besides passion and dedication to teaching, it seems that the sources of meaning for academic identities also originate from experiences of academic work as transformative and inspirational, hence it positions academics to positively influence students' future, as stated by Rhea:

I just love teaching, as a teacher you have a chance every day to make a change. Ok maybe just a small change, but a change. You teach someone who wants to learn something new every day, so I'm very passionate as a teacher. My students always tell me that they want to be good teachers just like me. [Laughs] But I tell them all the time, 'hey this is not glamorous work for the celebrities or the lazy ones. You must roll up your sleeves and

work hard in life to be someone...even to be good in anything you must put in effort'. But they say 'ok madam' as if they hear me, but I know they don't.

From this narrative it seems that Rhea believes that by working hard and teaching her students the value of working hard, she contributes positively to their outlook in life. This confirms Taylor's (1989:33) statement that individuals develop self-affirming images based on their values which help them to appear favourably in the eyes of the people that they interact with. Therefore students' aspirations to imitate her (as their teacher) is both a source of scepticism and self-esteem for Rhea. However, being viewed as a role model illustrates the desirable position of power and influence that Dr Rhea is in as an academic.

Her behaviour at work and during interaction with her students also inspires her students; hence they wish to emulate her actions in similar contexts in the future (Zirkel, 2002:359). This confirms the view that identities are constructed from the distinct networks of relationships in which people occupy positions and play roles (Stryker & Burke, 2000:5). It also confirms Mead's (1934) statement that the self is a product of two processes, the human mind's reflexive action and a person's interactions with others (Owens et al., 2010:478). This can be seen in the way Anderson constructs his identity as an academic: *"I have a passion for my job. I think I like it even though it does not pay well; I am happy about it. The salary does not motivate me at all, but I am motivated by other things such as the subjects themselves, they are interesting"*.

Anderson's narrative underscores the findings of Na et al.'s (2011) study which found that Chinese academic staff were satisfied by the work itself but they are not satisfied with their income and opportunities for promotion. However, similar to Alden, Anderson seems to accord positive experiences of his job to teaching 'subjects'. Even so, this reflection helps him to realise that although his job does not pay well, it is intellectually stimulating. Hence his work situation rewards him intrinsically. This confirms Van Winkel et al.'s (2017:2) observation that academic roles provide opportunities to express and develop academic identities.

Academic roles also organise functions while academic identities organise meaning for the roles. As such, meanings for his identity as an academic are created from interacting with others and reflecting on the material and non-material benefits of his job. This view is confirmed by McCall and Simmons (1978) interactional approach to IT which states that identities are constructed through an interaction and have an idiosyncratic dimension which involves the distinctive interpretations that individuals bring to their roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39; Stets, 2006:89). Therefore it follows that academic identities are a public component of the self and stem from the interaction with others (Stone, 1962:93). Nevertheless, the findings revealed that teaching was so deeply entrenched in some participants that it became a

'calling' and not just a job. This confirms Harland and Pickering's (2011:64) view that academic identities are related to the traditional academic calling and the kind of work tasks and working conditions that academics are engaged in. In this way, they experience 'fit' between own self-concepts, values and their work which makes their job meaningful (Sathe, 2008:29; Cameron et al. 2003:302). This can be seen in the case of Michael who says:

My job is basically lecturing...well, lecturing is what I like to do... How can I say? I could say it is my calling to teach, to lecture and to impart ideas or to impart knowledge to students and see them improving, changing and learning from day to day...and passing that knowledge to the wider society in their own nation. So to me it's a passion. I think... I like it intrinsically. It's okay so, I think I am in the right place as concerns the job I am doing.

Here it seems that teaching helps Michael to develop an image of himself and his place in the world (Moore, 2001:82). It could therefore be said that Michael's academic identity is a manifestation of the value that he accords to disseminating knowledge and transforming people. This confirms Mead's (1934) statement that humans act toward things based on the interaction and the meaning that those things have for them. Mead (1934) also stated that meanings were handled in and modified through an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things that he or she encountered (Crossman, 2017). Hence his identity as an academic represents the way in which he distinguishes himself from others in social relations (Jenkins, 1996:4). A similar situation is observed for Quincy who views his job as not only making a positive societal contribution and 'fitting' to his personality but also wholly enriching and meaningful:

Teaching for me it's a calling... it's something that you know... you enjoy. I enjoy doing it. One thing that really makes me like my profession... like my job of teaching is when I see my products being successful teachers out there. It fills my heart with joy to see that I am responsible for this teacher. You know when you go to one school and find your former students there. They are teachers and they are happy to see you and they introduce you to their parents and friends and their siblings and say 'that's my teacher'. You know it makes you happy and it also tells you that you were a good teacher to them... otherwise when they see you they would run away when they see you come (Quincy).

Quincy's narrative indicates that he perceives his job as a vehicle for making an impact on the society. This is the source of meaning for his identity as an academic. He considers his work to not only be socially valuable but also equally pleasurable (Cameron et al. 2003:302). In this way, the work and the tasks that Quincy does give him meaning and provides intrinsic benefit (Cameron & Caza, 2005:91; Teerikangas & Valikangas, 2012:83). Therefore, the view that meaning (including self-meanings or

identities) must be shared by people through interaction in order for them to be meaningful (Vryan et al. 2003:368) is confirmed. Nevertheless, one thing also seems to be relevant for Quincy's identity as an academic; he uses 'the looking glass self' to build his identity as an academic. He imagines how he appears to his students and from these imagined judgements he develops the feelings of pride (Cooley, 1902:152; Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979:549-550; Baumeister & Bushman, 2014:82). Thus Quincy derives meaning for his identity as an academic from his students imagined and real reactions to him. Quincy also judges his effectiveness and behaviours as a teacher from his students' reactions to him (Ferrante, 2015). Consequently, Quincy's academic identity confirms Cooley's (1902) statement that the self cannot be separated from social life as it is necessarily involved in reference to others (Shrauger & Schoeneman, 1979:549).

To conclude, it seems that all the participants who constructed their academic identities from lived experiences of enjoying teaching confirm the view that people act towards others and things according to the meanings that they attribute to those people or things (Rousseau, 2002:251; Sanderson, 2001:25). It also highlights the third theme '*task preferences in the academic role*' in Darabi et al.'s (2017) study which showed that many academic staff emphasised teaching as a core part of their academic identity. Thus, being 'a passionate teacher' involves meanings of liking and dedication to teaching, continual assessment of own teaching skills, being innovative and exemplary and perceiving own job as a calling to transform lives. This finding confirms the view that meanings that constitute 'who' one is lead an individual to increased feelings of authenticity (Burke & Stets, 2009:125).

5.2.2 Applicability

The definition of the situation is an important tool for examining how individuals create and reinforce meanings in social situations as they respond not only to objective features of the situation but also to the meaning that the situation has for them (Rousseau, 2002:104). Thus prior to any self-determined act of behaviour, there is always a stage of examination and deliberation called the definition of the situation (Thomas, 1923:41). This implies that individuals act on the basis of the meanings that they ascribe to situations that confront them and that reality is created through the definition of the situation (Appelrouth & Desfor-Edles, 2010:197).

Similarly, when self-experiences are accurately symbolised and are included in the self-concept, then they create a state of congruence of self and experience (Gendlin, 1959:206). Similar to Thomas' (1923) statement that "if men and women define situations as real, then they are real in their consequences" (Arena & Arrigo, 2006:57), the findings of the study reveal that all the participants who experienced 'applicability' in their work constructed academic identities from defining their work experiences as having a 'real' connection to their professional training. For that reason, the academic identity thus

constructed is one of a '*competent teacher*'. Using this identity construction, academics make sense of their work from a confident angle and the core feature of their identities is 'work applicability'. This was seen in the case of Clark who developed his academic identity from the belief that his work had similar fundamental characteristics to his professional training. He explained:

I have been working here as a part-time lecturer since 2001. By then I was living a different life, as I was somehow still engaged in priesthood. But then after I resigned from that part, I decided and said 'hey what can I do now that I am free to pursue my own personal interests?' So I went to East Africa...I graduated with Masters there. Previously, I only had honours; so after graduation I came back here [to Lesotho]. Luckily, a few months later I found a job here [at NUL]. So, I started to work here at NUL since 2015. I like the job. I find that all I have studied is relevant to what I am teaching the students. So that makes me happy (Clark).

Clark's narrative highlights that he defines his work as consistent with his professional training and credentials. His work and its setting give him the impression of aptitude as an academic. For him, this self-perception justifies the importance of reinventing himself (resigning from priesthood) and attaining a higher qualification; it also helps him to identify with his work and its setting at NUL further. This is in concert with Oyserman et al.'s (2012:70) statement that the self is dual; it is a product of situations and a shaper of behaviour in situations. Hence, making sense of oneself (who one is, was, and may become) influences one to decide on the path to take in the world.

In Clark's case, working at NUL (the definition of the situation) does not provide meaning for his identity as an academic in and of itself. Instead, meaning for Clark comes from the process of construction (finding relevance) when doing work and when interacting with students, a process termed 'symbolic communication' by Sanderson (2001:25). Stets and Burke (2003: 4) opine that identities develop when individuals work in jobs that affirm their self-evaluations. Oyserman et al. (2012:70) disagree; they observe that identities are constructed in anticipation of individual people's motivation, thoughts, actions, feelings and ability to control themselves in social situations. These views can be seen in the case of Holly who experiences jobs applicability because her work and professional qualifications fit across different disciplines within NUL. He says:

I teach courses mainly offered to students in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Humanities and Education...but then the courses that I teach are normally offered to in the Faculty of Science. I should also indicate that the courses have the practical component and I do carry out the practicals for students that are in 2nd year and 3rd year.

From her narrative it is clear that the meanings for Holly's identity as an academic emerge from shared interactions with others (Carter & Fuller, 2015:1-2). The perception that she does work that transcends discipline-based community boundaries also influences Holly to believe she is multi-talented and capable as an academic. Her perceived ability to 'fit' across work situations makes her believe that her work and its setting are applicable to her professional training; it also makes her feel that her 'adaptability' adds a special component to teaching which creates meaning for her identity as an academic. As such, Holly's academic identity is an ongoing activity rather than an achieved state (Perinbanayagam, 2000:84). It gives her behaviour meaning and purpose (Owens, 2006:214); it also gives her confidence to carry her identity into the various situations that she encounters at work. Therefore, as stated by Stets and Burke (2014a:3), Holly's academic identity is 'wedged in the locus of discovery, spontaneity and lowered inhibitions'. A similar situation is illustrated in narration by René. However in her case, she incorporates history and other events which transpired before she joined NUL to construct her current identity as an academic:

I have been working here since 2012. Actually I got the job while I was still a student in another university, doing honours. Actually I am into theatre and the stuff...I have so much experience in that. Ok...so I had attended a recital here at NUL, actually it was part of some project I was doing back at school. When I got here, I watched the performance and part of the work I did was to grade it. So I wrote to the lecturer concerned about what I had seen and what was missing and all that. It was just an honest opinion. But the guy was so impressed with my comments and competency. Next thing I know he says I must come and help him with his classes during breaks. So I came here and one day the head of department asked me what I was doing here and I told her. Well she seemed really happy but she told me that policy did not allow what was happening. Nobody just volunteers, especially if it's concerning teaching of students. So she gave me a job as a part-timer and I have always had that job.

René's narrative underpins Oyserman et al.'s (2012:87) view that sometimes people deliberately develop identities from their memories and from planning behaviour that fits who they are and who they want to become. Thus it seems René identifies with her work at NUL because she believes it fits her identities as an academic and an artist/performer, further confirming the statement that people interpret situations in ways that are congruent with their current and active identities. As such, René's academic identity is influenced by meaningful features of her work environment (Oyserman et al., 2012:88). Rachel shared similar sentiments. She said:

I am a lecturer, my task is to teach and research. As a performing artist, I always found working in performance productions very motivating, they always remind me why I fell in

love with the line of work I do...why I took the risks and chances to study arts instead of... you know, courses like law. So performance and being involved in production... it has always been what motivated me towards my career and my job. I think personally for me, why I like going to class... especially with the performing arts course and seeing interest in students...how much they are actually interested in finding out more about the management side of the course, because they are more used to the performance side of it. They do a lot of acting classes and other theoretical courses... but you know with the performing arts management they actually realise that there is something beyond performance when it comes to art. So that is one thing that I enjoy about my job... their class, themselves and their participation in class makes me to wake up in the morning and look forward to that particular class.

From Rachel's narrative, the meanings for her identity as academic developed from perceptions of doing applicable work; that is, she believes that her work matches and justifies her professional choices. Thus it could be surmised here that Rachel's work and its setting at NUL verify her identities as a performing artist and an academic. This confirms Stets' (2006:89) view that "to see the overall self, we must envision it as encompassing many different parts or identities, each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure". As such, identities are situationally specific (Stryker, 2000:24) and people have different selves which correspond to the different positions that they hold in groups (Stets, 2007:89).

Hence Rachel develops an identity as an academic because she values teaching students all aspects of performing arts and her job allows her to do so. The study also revealed that some participants had internalised their previous work experiences and identities to such an extent that they retained them and brought them into their work at NUL. According to Trede, Macklin, Bridges (2012:374), this strategy is justifiable since technical and interpersonal skills alone are inadequate for the full development of academic identities; instead, academics must use a mix of professional judgement, reasoning, critical self-evaluation and self-directed learning to develop their identities. One participant whose meanings stemmed from such a situation said:

I am a lecturer, and I am still at the level of a lecturer. When I first came here I was given another course apart from what I specialise in. So I asked 'why I am given subjects that I did not apply for if you accepted me on the strength of my application?' And they said I was needed there. And so I found myself doing what other people did not want to do. Taking lecturers because other people wanted to do their studies, they wanted to do their PhDs. When I got used to the system I said 'I must do those things that I am trained for and specialise in', so I started dropping that course and doing more of my specialisation because when I started I was doing lower years. So now I take care of that course from 4th year and

5th year because it's an honours program. I have a deep passion for pharmacy and for the practice of the industry. Actually, it has been my passion for some years now. So I feel that connection between my job here and the practice. Yes and I am happy to be doing that now (Elizabeth).

Elizabeth's narrative stresses the influence of cultural norms and power relations in the development of academic identities at NUL. That is, earlier on Elizabeth became aware of the unequal power relations between old and new members of communities at NUL. She believes that she was unfairly delegated work which did not allow her to develop professionally like older members of the department. Hence, she associates her current academic rank of junior lecturer with the negative job experiences when she first joined NUL. Based on Ashforth and Mael's (1989:26) observation, it may be concluded that as a newcomer Elizabeth was 'unsure of her role and apprehensive about her status' hence she felt powerless to voice her discontent about her work situation. However, with time she learned the general role expectations and established a position for herself in her community's social structure; from this, she was able to choose the courses which she felt were more applicable to her professional training. This did not only give her a sense of ownership in her work but it also contributed meaningfully to and reinforced her academic identity. This is in concert with Badley's (2016:381) statement that when academics first enter academic life, they continuously compose their academic identities as they negotiate their way through personal, departmental, institutional, national, and global relationships.

In summary, it seems that being a 'competent teacher' not only derives from feels of applicability across various work settings, but it is about being who one was meant to be. This confirms the view that individuals act on the basis of the meanings that they ascribe to the situations that confront them (Appelrouth & Desfor-Edles, 2010:197; Rousseau, 2002:104). MacKinnon (1994:62) also says that people often develop identities basing themselves on processes monitoring, the situation, constraints in the current definition of the situation and the overall context of the social act. Thus the perception that one's job is applicable derives from the thoughts or feelings of who one is (Stets & Burke, 2003:5) and represents an individual's biography of everyday life at a specific time, shaped by a person's actual life experiences and cultural history (Cote & Levine, 2015:27).

5.2.3 Exploitation

A social group, as a set of individuals who share the view that they are members of the same social category, is composed of people who are socially compared to and categorised with the self and are labelled the 'in-group' while persons who differ from the self are compared to and categorised as the 'out-group'. All social groups have distinguishing features for the in-group and the out-group members as well as provisioning for some differentiation among in-group members (Burke & Stets, 2009:118).

Burke and Stets (2009:119) state that uniformity of perception among in-group members helps them to develop a sense of “we” or “us” toward the in-group, and “them” toward the out-group. From the study findings, all the participants who experienced ‘exploitation’ in their work constructed their academic identities from ‘group comparisons’; that is, they compared their work situation to those of other academics and professionals elsewhere. Accordingly, the academic identity constructed is one of a ‘*demoralised teacher*’. Using this identity construction, academics view themselves as being taken advantage of, and they make sense of their work from an ambivalent angle and the core feature of their identities is doing ‘devalued work’. Thus they make social comparisons in order to examine uniformity between themselves and those whom they perceive as similar to them on relevant dimensions (Hogg, 2000:402). They also compare their own group with other groups, and from such comparisons, group norms, group structure and intergroup relations which provide a framework for group-based social comparisons, emerge (Hogg, 2000:401). This was observed in Carl’s narrative:

It’s true that I teach students, but firstly I am an IT guy. So being an IT guy, I think when it comes to remuneration...you know you did IT, but here you are teaching and you have your counterparts working in town... working in South Africa with bigger salaries. I know I am sitting here earning peanuts.

Here Carl’s narrative shows the influence of the external academic communities in the construction of academic identities at NUL. It seems boundary encounters with professional counterparts influence Carl to develop the perception that his job is exploitative and this erodes meaning for his identity as an academic. Hence he ceases to view NUL academics as his in-group; instead he wants to be like IT professionals outside academia whom he perceives as earning better salaries. This also implies that Carl views NUL academics as the out-group which he believes are being exploited. This confirms Chen and Lin’s (2008:2) view that individuals develop a social identity from creating a favourable bias towards social groups that they believe they belong to. The use of the metaphor ‘*sitting here earning peanuts*’ is another indication that Carl believes his career in academia is stagnant and unfulfilling. This further strengthens the bonds that he feels for his new in-group of IT professionals employed outside NUL. Similar sentiments were shared by Nelson in his comment:

The job of teaching is the one most of us are here for; in fact all of us are here for that. Teaching at university is what it’s all about. But...honestly speaking, when you look at the other...how other lecturers in the SADC region talk...about other lecturers from Swaziland or Namibian or South African universities, you know... their earnings are much higher than us. Even the LHDA, which in the past... we used to be told when we were students that there is no difference working at NUL and LHDA. But now I can tell you... from my colleagues who work there, what I earn compared to them is peanuts.

Nelson's narrative seems to indicate two things about the construction of his academic identity; he compares his situation with what other professionals in Lesotho and academics from HEIs outside Lesotho are earning. From this comparison, he develops the perception that academics at NUL are paid far below what other academics are paid elsewhere and this seems to be a source of dissatisfaction for him. Secondly, Nelson appears to have lost the idealised view that he once had for the academic work due to his current perception that it is devalued in the context of Lesotho. This confirms the view that individuals rely on comparisons to others for information about themselves and to validate their social reality (Forsyth, 2010:96).

However, it seems pertinent to state that similar to Carl, Nelson uses the metaphor 'earning peanuts'. For me this metaphor shows that Nelson believes that his work and its setting at NUL is exploitative to him as an academic. However unlike Carl, his operationalisation of the metaphor is a form of self-categorisation; that is, he uses it to compare his work situation as an in-group member of underpaid NUL academics to the out-group of professionals working in private organisations within Lesotho and academics in South African HEIs. As such, the use of the metaphor '*earning peanuts*' is a descriptor of reality which helps Carl and Nelson make sense of their lives (Kram et al. 2012:308). This finding also underscores King and Billot's (2016:159) view that metaphors are a natural (even unconscious) way of structuring meaning and constructing a clearer understanding of experience. Besides social comparisons with the in-group and out-group members, Stets and Burke (2014b:66) state that identities develop from the influence of neighbouring social structures; thus academics compare the working conditions of academics at NUL with those of other academics in similar environments. In this case, those from South African HEIs; thus South African academics become the referent group for NUL academics, as stated by Leslie:

I have been working as a lecturer here since 2004. I think I take it [my job] to be a very, very important job, a job that I like...although here and there sometimes I have some reservations when it comes to rewards. I have reservations because as a person you begin to have friends...eh...to interact with people, you have friends from other countries particularly from South Africa. Maybe here sometimes I will be unfair. That is where I have a lot of colleagues and you begin to compare your job, the environment under which you work, the reward that comes with the work that they do and you compare it with what you are getting here and then you begin to see that oh but this is some sort of a modern slavery.

As shown above, Leslie compares himself to referent others using an upward comparison; that is, he compares himself with those whom he believes are better off than he is (Stets & Burke, 2014:39; Breckler, Olson & Wiggins, 2006:129). From this comparison, Leslie develops a discontent with the reward systems at NUL, which leads him to develop an ambivalent perception of his job as an academic.

This implies that Leslie views his work as essential yet taxing and not rewarding financially. It further confirms the view that individuals sometimes identify and disidentify with some aspects of their work and its setting, especially if the complex and equivocal meanings that they attach to it are based on their values, goals and beliefs (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:4). Stets and Burke (2014b:66) further opine that inasmuch as individuals develop their own meanings for identities, these identity meanings are cultural and are tied and entrenched in the social structure. Hence, through interacting with others and upwardly comparing himself, Leslie not only becomes aware that he is not happy with the reward systems within the NUL structure but he also ends up feeling angry and resentful from his perception that he should be doing better than he is. It is not surprising then to hear Leslie say:

I have observed something that is annoying in its own way about working in this university. The fact that now...with the latest developments at NUL...now they seem to be systematically taking away some of those things that rendered the work to be better. There was that view in the past that working at NUL is relatively better to other jobs here in Lesotho⁸. Now the work has been devalued for us...it really becomes...it takes that direction where it [the job] is becoming modern day slavery (Leslie).

Here it seems that Leslie shares Nelson's perception that in the past academic jobs were better relative to others in Lesotho; now he feels like academics at NUL no longer work in high status jobs with perks and privileges. This is illustrated by his view that academic work at NUL is a form of 'modern day slavery'. For me this comparison not only illustrates the same exploitation felt by Carl and Nelson in their work as academics, but it also shows that that Leslie believes that he is over-worked and underpaid. This confirms King and Billot's (2016:159) statement that the use of metaphors in narratives helps participants to uncover what they might not be able to express directly or even realise about themselves. The interview continues:

Interviewer: So do you think you view your job as a form of slavery because you are somehow unhappy with the conditions of your work?

Leslie: Of course yes. Of course yes.

Interviewer: Why? Tell me why you are unhappy.

⁸ Before 2005, NUL offered its staff housing and car loans. However, this was stopped due to the financial constraints the university faced and staff was encouraged to seek loans for such needs from the bank. Those who had benefited from such schemes in the past claimed NUL loans did not have the added costs that the banks typically added to loans. This issue of bringing back university loans for staff is still a burning issue, with many of NUL's staff like Leslie wishing it could be brought back. Hence Leslie's statement that NUL took those things that made working at NUL worthwhile despite the low pay.

Leslie: *I am unhappy because if we are talking about what you see on a daily basis, what you are experiencing obviously is going to have an impact on how you think and how you view your job. If you are interacting with a number of students on a daily basis, you begin to say 'but I think with these numbers the university must be making a lot of money. So I should be entitled to a certain share'... if you want to look at it from the wages or salaries point of view. If you look at the resources you begin to see... 'but what is this university doing with the money? Why are they not buying the resources?' You know I think I would accept it if they were buying resources. Then I would say the money that was supposed to be coming to me is now being channelled to other areas. But now you don't see any sort of development in your areas and you begin to say it seems like nobody cares here.*

However, the findings reveal that other participants have different views about the salaries that are paid to academics at NUL, as stated by Diana who viewed working at NUL as upward social mobility: *"Comparatively speaking to other institutions of higher learning in Lesotho, I know that the salaries here are better ...even though they are not perfect, they are better. Just like when I was at another college, I know that was a gain for me when I joined the NUL".* From her narrative, it seems that the referent group comparisons depend on individual experiences and perceptions of their work situation. So unlike the previous participants who viewed their work experiences at NUL as being exploitative, Diana views her job at NUL as relatively better than those in other institutions in Lesotho.

In summary it seems that the participants who constructed academic identities from lived experiences of exploitation believe that they exemplify the 'in-group' of under-paid academics and from these they have developed negative job perceptions and group prototype of exploited academics. Thus being an 'a demoralised teacher' includes meanings of being underpaid and doing cheapened work. This situation highlights the view that social identity is tied to a social group and derives from it (Burke & Stets, 2003:129). It seems that being an exploited academics is categorised with the self and that such academics are labelled the 'in-group' while those who are 'well paid' differ from the self and are categorised as the 'out-group' (Burke & Stets, 2009:118).

5.2.4 Facilitation

Having a particular social identity means being like others in the group and seeing things from the group's perspective. Therefore, social identity emanates from people's ability to classify themselves and others into various social categories in an attempt to define others and order the social environment (Ashforth & Mael, 1989:20-21). Thus, social identity represents the collective self; it emerges when individuals are included in social groups and when they contrast their in-group with the relevant out-groups. Similarly, the collective self is based on individuals' impersonal bonds to others derived from

common and symbolic identification with a group. It also relies on inter-group comparison processes and is associated with individuals' need to protect and enhance the in-group (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001:2). From the study findings, the participants who experienced 'facilitation' in their work used their ability to aid teaching and learning as a 'group prototype' of NUL academic as a social group. Thus making teaching and learning easier signifies interconnected perceptions, attitudes, feelings and behaviour of teachers who construct academic identities of a '*supportive teacher*'. Using this identity construction, academics understand their work and its setting from an obliging and attentive angle. Therefore being a supportive teacher is accepted as self-descriptive (Delamater et al. 2015:132). This can be seen in the narratives of the following participants:

I am a lecturer. Mm... I have been teaching since 2009, undergraduate not at Master's level. [Laughs]. As a lecturer here my job is teaching and research. That is the job of every lecturer here. Some do it well, others not so well but at the end it is what we are all here to do (Norris).

My job in this higher educational institution is primarily teaching and research and that's the basics we perform as lecturers. Teaching and research. Yes. Ever since I came to this university I have been working in the same department and faculty. The only thing that changes perhaps is the fact that I sometimes teach different courses. But other than that, my job is primarily teaching and research...and that's the basics we perform as lecturers. Teaching and research. Yes (John).

From the above narratives, it seems that Norris and John view their work as the '*basis*' of academic work at NUL; that is, teaching and research is the group prototype of NUL academics which confirms Burke and Stets' (2009:119) statement that when individuals start perceiving themselves as exemplifying an in-group model, the process of depersonalisation has occurred. They cease to see themselves as unique individuals; rather they view themselves in terms of the ideal attributes of in-group members (Burke & Stets, 2009:119). Hence academic identities are associated with the acceptance of meanings connected with the group. Accordingly, individuals whose identities are organised around interaction with other members of their social group '*act*' like other members of the group (Stets & Burke, 2014:5) as it is stated by Robyn:

I am an instructor. Here at our department we mostly help students in science laboratories. That is what we do on a daily basis... so it's my job here at NUL. Well, I have never been anything other than that here. Well before...since I joined the department, I worked as a part-time lecturer but I just got a permanent job this year so that's the only thing that has changed.

Here it is clear that Robyn 'acts like' other academics who help students with their studies in her department; thus Robyn's identity as an academic stems from being a group member and from finding assisting students with their studies meaningful. As such, her group-based academic identity derives from 'accessibility' based on all readily available social categories (derived from memory or situations) that are deemed important to individuals. Thus from the readily available categories of academics as a group, to teach and help students with their studies, Robyn constructs an academic identity. In this way, when Robyn displays concern for her students she comes to *know* 'who she is' confirming Walkington's (2005:54) assertion that teachers' identities are based on experiences and beliefs about teaching and being a teacher. A similar situation is observed for David, who says:

Currently, I am teaching two modules. So far there are no significant challenges... mistakes that I have with students. In fact a few of my students have recently come to me and told me that they enjoy my classes. I like that very much. That is what made me aware that I have a lot of pride in my students. One thing I have observed is that being a student and a lecturer at NUL are two different animals. Now I am the one telling students that they need to focus on their studies more and be serious. As a lecturer you get concerned about your students' work. Of course you must have confidence when you approach students since they can tell when you are knowledgeable.

From David's narration, it seems that he experiences a 'comparative fit' with his work duties as an academic; that is, his academic identity is the result of comparing his own (current) behaviour and interaction with his students to that of his previous lecturers where, similar to what they said to him when he was a student, he wants his students to take their studies seriously. This confirms Stets and Burke's (2014a:5) assertion that individuals whose identities are organised around interaction with members of their social group 'act' like other members of the group. Therefore by seeking to emulate the roles of his own lecturers when interacting with his students, David is not only bolstering his self-esteem but he perceives himself to be an academic (Cragun & Cragun, 2006:72).

By identifying with his previous lecturers, David also goes through a 'classical identification' whereby he desires to emulate or gain the qualities of the other; hence by telling his students to take their studies seriously, David is actually trying to be '*like*' or to '*be*' his previous lecturers (Ashforth & Mael, 1989:22). Secondly, by comparing himself to his previous lecturers, David is accentuating the similarities between them (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). This then affects his attitudes, behavioural norms, styles of speech and beliefs and values that he accepts as true for lecturers. This could explain why he wants to be perceived as a confident and knowledgeable lecturer by his students, based on the behaviour of his past lecturers. Thirdly, through reflexivity, David imagines and perceives himself through the eyes of his students helping him to evaluate his role performance and to form an academic identity (Andersen &

Taylor, 2008:81; Dittmar, 2011:748; Shaffner, 2009:205; Weigert & Gecas, 2003:275). This seems to affect his self-esteem positively; confirming Musolf's (2003:8) assertion that an individual's ability to *reflect* rather than respond by reflex helps him to ascribe meaning to events when interacting with others. David's identity as an academic therefore is a consequence of direct encounters with others within his disciplinary community (Stets & Burke, 2003: 5). Nevertheless, I could argue that David's self-definition is somewhat one dimensional in that he considered only the views of 'some' of his students who gave him feedback about his class. It might just as easily have been that more of his students did not enjoy his classes. However David clearly does not feel a need to find out what every student thinks about him. This confirms Wiegert and Gecas's (2003:275) assertion that agents do not passively accept feedback and input from the social structure and others. Instead, they *self-indicate*; they use their agency to select, distort, defend or ignore feedback from others in order to protect, maintain or even enhance their self-esteem (Wiegert & Gecas, 2003:275). A comparable situation is observed in Quincy's narrative:

My job here is to...we are training teachers that go out to schools and would be employed to teach learners so we are giving them content skills... content knowledge. But we are also giving them better logic skills that they need to be able to exercise the profession of teaching. But for me in particular... I am giving students the content to complement what my colleagues in the Faculty of Humanities are doing. I am also giving them better logic skills that they need to teach the content. So I provide them with knowledge to equip them as professional teachers (Quincy).

From this it is clear that Quincy experiences a normative fit in his work as an academic; that is, he believes that he fits in the categories of academics who facilitate learning. This influences him to find his work meaningful. This also implies that Quincy values the knowledge dissemination aspect of his job, since the general feeling of providing students with skills and knowledge is evident in his narrative. It could therefore be said that Quincy's distinctive identity as an academic derives from the self-perception as an educator; hence facilitating learning is part of his ultimate objective in life (Davenport, 2012:15). This objective helps him to find his life worth living and his actions worthy of undertaking (Mackenzie, 2008:10-11). Besides having a normative fit in terms of values, the findings of this study are that some academics were guided by the social expectation to train students to take their place in society, as stated by these research participants:

I am a lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities. I have been here for about three years and two months. I am a teacher here. It's the best profession on earth. I love it and I think teaching is the best profession on earth personally. I teach not because of money, I teach because

of the satisfaction I get from the job by training students to take their position in society and continue where we left off (Alden).

Here at NUL I am a lecturer. It is quite an interesting kind of job, challenging in that you get people of different personalities which at the end of the day you're expecting or feel happy if you have taught and modelled them satisfactorily so that they fit in the market after completion. So it's challenging because you may not come out with what you expected and it does not sit well if you have not contributed in the way that makes your output what you wanted (Hope).

From these narratives, Alden and Hope seem to develop their identities as academics from two sources of meaning. Firstly, they identify with the view of themselves as members of academia whose sole responsibility is to train the next batch of professionals. That is, they perceive themselves to be 'one with other academics' whose duty is to train students to take off where '*they*' left off. Secondly, Alden and Hope incorporate this view of themselves with the meanings and expectations associated with being an occupant of an academic role (Stets & Burke, 2000:225). Therefore the relevance for social identities is not on similarity with other members but on interconnected uniqueness (Stets & Burke, 2000:227).

However, Hickman and Kuhn (1956:22) state that the self is a set of statuses and identities acquired and maintained in symbolic interaction with others; as such, the self is not only a reflection of the social system but it is phenomenological and instrumental in patterned social conduct (Hickman & Kuhn, 1956:22). The self is also regarded as the universal variable, present in all walks of one's life; therefore an identity is an individual's attitude and planned actions towards his own mind and body as an object (Hickman & Kuhn, 1956:46; Spitzer et al., 1995:123). The social structure with its shared language and meanings permits individuals to engage in social interaction and to reflect upon the self as an object (Stets & Burke, 2009:1).

To summarise, it seems that the identity of the academics who experience the facilitation of leaning at work derives from social group identification which not only influences intra-group cohesion, cooperation and positive evaluations, but is also associated with loyalty to and pride in the group and its activities (Carter & Fuller, 2015:3). Thus being a 'supportive teacher' includes meanings of helping students, emulating other academics and being an educator and/or trainer. This confirms Cragun and Cragun's (2006:71-72) statement that an individual's identification with the group is not only situational but it also depends on character traits, personal relationships with members of the group and participants' perceptions of own capabilities and competencies.

5.2.5 Multitasking

Academics live different aspects of their work lives in relatively small, yet specialised networks of social relationships through the roles that support participation in such networks (Merolla et al. 2012:151). Consequently academic identities are meanings tied to a role and, together with the expectations, tied to its social position (Burke & Stets, 2003:129). In this way, academic roles define who academics are as individuals and also signal their identities, enable them to classify themselves and allow others to anticipate their behaviour as actors in those roles (Leung et al., 2014:426). The findings of the study are that the participants who experienced 'multitasking' in their work believed that their work and its setting allowed them to perform more than one task simultaneously. Therefore, the academic identity thus constructed is one of a '*multitalented teacher*.' It allows academics to make sense of their work from an expert angle. Therefore the three key areas of academic work; teaching, research and administration or management (Oshagbemi, 2000:124) and their corresponding roles are important for the construction of academic identities since academics perceive them as indicative of who they are at work (Callero, 1985:203). This can be seen in the narratives of the following research participant:

So it [my job] is teaching and research. I teach, and that part is ok. But one can't just be sitting around and claiming to only teach. One must also do research and I take that seriously. My department actually encourages us to take it seriously. Even if you are lazy you see colleagues climbing on and on and that makes you jealous and you say 'hey this guy was not born a professor, I will also become a professor. I know I can'. So I write and publish [Laughs]. Some lecturers here don't want to even write their names on a research at all. That always surprises me. Someone here for 20 years still Mrs or Mr! I know that will never happen to me. So I have been writing a lot. A lot really...yes, I have been managing to write and publish (Norris).

Norris' narrative emphasises the findings of Van Winkel et al.'s (2017) study among Dutch academics where participants had developed a 'skilled researcher' academic identity which reflected participants who strived to enhance their research competencies. It also confirms the theme 'positive and negative feelings around research/scholarship' in Darabi et al.'s (2017) study among UK academics which showed that having a paper accepted for a conference or for publication in a journal was extremely rewarding for academics. Norris' account indicates that he constructs his identity from being socialised and internalising the cultural expectations related to being an academic at NUL, to simultaneously teach, research and publish. Therefore, these academic values have been instilled in Norris to such an extent that researching and publishing create meanings for the construction of his academic identity. Even so, another aspect seems to be relevant here; Norris' constant writing and publishing have a pragmatic aspect. They are a form of identity work tied to his need to be recognised and to ascent

academic ranks within the NUL social group. This finding confirms Beech's (2008:52) view that engaging in identity work when constructing identities implies that individuals imbue their self-images with meanings which are appropriated as part of their identity. In this sense, the products of Norris's writings and publications (such as journal articles, book chapters, conference papers) become symbols and community rituals that generate and reinforce his academic identity as a multitiered teacher. Thus similar to Cragun and Cragun (2006:72), it is my contention that Norris's self-meanings as a researcher and teacher are 'true and vital' to him. Therefore it seems that having multiple role identities enables the construction of academic role identities. This can be seen in the case of Holly who constructed her academic identity from the perception that her work and its setting allows for engagement in both academic and professional work roles within and outside NUL:

I think after joining NUL, I was nominated to join a prestigious committee in Maseru on climate change. The focal point...that is... Lesotho's focal point on climate change issues. They have established a National Committee and the faculty nominated me to attend those meetings. When I joined the committee, I was chosen or elected or whatever as the chairperson of that committee. So I take it that if I had not joined NUL, I would not be sitting in that committee and making a difference.

Holly's narrative highlights Lea and Stierer's (2011) study which found that academics are able to exert power and authority around a range of textual practices, even when those practices were far removed from the more conventional domains of research and teaching where one would expect to find the main locus of academic influence. Other participants added:

Ja... my job...I am a lecturer here. I am lecturing in plant protection courses and weed science...those are my fields. Ja... I like my job, I like teaching...I also like research on top of everything...coming from the research institute or coming from the government. I also enjoy doing community out-reach programmes which are also part of my job (Nelson).

My job is that one of teaching... I lecture. Besides teaching, I am a coordinator, working with students and interacting with schools on the students' placement. I am also the one establishing a rapport with high school principals, getting information and getting feedback. I am also engaged outside the university with the Ministry of Education...there are some consultancies that I do with the Ministry of Education; and currently I am working on something to do with a bank here in Lesotho (Marcel).

I am a lecturer. I teach second year's [students] design courses. My responsibilities are lecturing, researching and doing some community outreach, especially to assess the

methods used for plant farming and increasing skill bases in farmers in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (Hilda).

The participants' narratives seem to resonate the findings from Van Winkel et al.'s (2017) study which showed that academics with a 'liaison officer' academic identity moved beyond the boundaries of domains of practice in order to enrich their academic roles. Thus, the participants' role identities seem to contain large sets of meanings which they use to describe what a particular role means to them. Hence, there is correspondence between the meanings they individually apply to a role identity and their behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2009:115). As Turner (1962:24) states, since roles cannot exist without relevant other-roles toward which it is oriented, it seems Nelson and Hilda's roles as a 'teacher', a 'researcher' and 'community worker' do not make any sense without the roles of others whom they interact with while playing them out. Thus their academic identities come from subjective interpretations of their work. They also depict individually preferred self-perceptions when occupying a social position (Owens et al. 2010:481). This sentiment is echoed in the narration by Alex:

Well I enjoy teaching and lecturing er... I enjoy doing research particularly the research part you know... it's always you come up with new things and that's very exciting actually. It's not because you are going to publish it but whenever you come up with something which has not been done before it's a great sense of accomplishment and it's very interesting. That's really the major driving force you know...to do research. But of course when I say this, it doesn't mean that it's straightforward. To do research you need to have a lot of materials, chemicals, the instruments all the necessary er... compounds. Without all these things really... one would be handicapped.

Alex's narrative highlights the findings of Van Winkel et al.'s (2017) study among Dutch academics. He found a 'disciplinary expert' academic identity which reflected maturity through participation in the academic world. The study revealed that participants with this identity valued intellectual growth in their respective disciplines and included participants with some *depth of understanding of the disciplinary field* who loved diving deeply into a subject and cited curiosity about subject-relatedness as a motivator for engaging in research and those who were *recognised and persuasive experts* who strived to be credible disciplinary experts. His narrative also shows that Alex's job allows him to test the boundaries of knowledge and from his success he gets a great sense of achievement. This confirms the view that people are capable of creativity and improvisation in the performance of their roles, even within the overall requirements and restrictions of their social positions (Owens et al., 2010:481). In this way, Alex's academic identity is achieved by integrating with significant others (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001:2). Thus it could be said that academic identities are role identities constructed when occupying specific social positions (Owens et al., 2010:481) as in the case of Daniel:

Actually I have been interested in teaching, particularly teaching agriculture and I think I am satisfied. Maybe with time I will discover some things which I am against but so far I don't see anything that is strange or odd with this job. In my job, I teach students and I am also engaged in agricultural research in several projects here at NUL and for private organisations in Maseru. As for me, ok...I enjoy teaching... imparting knowledge. If I transmit the knowledge and students understand what I am saying, I enjoy that very much. If I can prepare a good lecture and students understand and do what I'm saying, that's what I enjoy most.

Daniel's narrative highlights several things about the development of his identity as an academic. Firstly, he is a recent recruit; hence his identity is emergent. He is still in a process of forming, expanding, repairing and revising his self-conception as an academic (Leung et al. 2014:424). Secondly, although Daniel seems to experience role congruence from his work roles, he seems to exhibit behaviours which indicate that he has more role expectations for his position as a lecturer than his role as a researcher (Delamater et al., 2015:13) in that he enjoys it when his students understand and apply what he teaches them. Therefore Daniel's identity as an academic stems both from the positive perceptions and experiences of his work and the interrelatedness of his roles (Stets, 2006: 92).

To sum up, it seems that the academic identity of academics who experience 'multitasking' in their work derives from the reciprocal influence of networks in interactions across situations and contexts (Carter & Fuller, 2015:4); as such, their academic identities have a conventional dimension associated with the cultural expectations tied to social positions in the social structure. They also involve the distinctive analyses that individuals bring to their roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39). Therefore being 'a multi-talented teacher' includes meanings of aspiration, performing multiple work roles concurrently and being inventive. Thus, as Stets (2006:89) states, "to see the overall self, we must envision it as encompassing many different parts or identities, each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure".

5.2.6 Prestige

For Goffman (1959), the origins of identity lie in every-day and small scale social engagements between people, for it is in these micro-social interactions between people where the answer to the complex question of what identity is can be found (Van den Berg, 2008:1). In 'Frame Analysis', Goffman (1974) states that people "structure (frame) the content (picture) of what they are experiencing (observing)" (Scheff, 2003:39). As such, frames provide contexts which enable people's interpretation of events. Frames also organise people's experiences and provide them with assumptions about what is going on (Rettie, 2004:117). Hence when they enter into social situations, they already have pre-existing assumptions about the situation supplied by shared frames (Garner & Hancock, 2014:352).

From this it could be inferred that identities are not localisable properties of human beings, instead they are dynamic, open ended and always developing. Identities also depict different experiences and complexities of social life (Van den Berg, 2008:3). Similarly, the findings revealed that all the participants experienced 'prestige' in their daily engagement with others within the NUL social structure; hence they believed that their work and its setting furnished them with respect and honour. Consequently, they constructed the academic identity of an '*influential teacher*' from lived work experiences of doing admired work. From this perception, they make sense of their work and its setting from an esteemed angle; hence the core feature of their identities is 'work significance'. Accordingly, their academic identities reflect the positive attitudes which they hold about their job which are gathered from the group and which an individual has the opportunity to express distinctively (Elliott, 2014:34). This can be seen in the case of Marianne whose academic identity is shaped by her lifelong yearning to work in academia:

I am a lecturer here at NUL. Well to tell you the truth I have been working here for a short time. I have been working here for less than a year. I think I began in March last year. I have always liked and admired lecturers. I saw that it was a respected career...here academics are respected and they are always sought for analysis even of social issues especially here in our department. That happens a lot really. That makes me feel that power...you know...that sort of influence on the way people see things. You can tell them 'hey you did this because of this' it makes you an expert in that way. An expert of why something is happening. So that I like very much...oh, and the environment is professional and I like interacting with professionals.

From her narrative it may be surmised that since becoming an academic, Marianne experiences inner unity based on who she '*hoped*' to become (when she admired academics) and who she '*is*' now as an academic (Bronk, 2011:32). Her identity is formed out of her ability to move with direction and effectiveness to find meaningful outlets for the actualisation of her interests and values within the academic social milieu (Kroger, 2015:65). Therefore as Marianne interacts with others, her self-esteem increases and her identity as an academic is reinforced. The findings also revealed that NUL's method of classifying its academics using a system of ranking⁹, contributed to the construction of academic identities. As such academics' identities have been incorporated into socially structured inequalities and inter-group relations through self-evaluations or the ability to conceptualise and evaluate one's characteristics, abilities and actions in relation to the outside world (Leary & Terry, 2012:270). Even so, academics who develop academic identities using evaluations do so by finding congruence between own *objective statuses* (control over resources) and *subjective status* (perception of one's own ability

⁹ NUL ranks its academics in descending order; professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, and lecturers. Nevertheless, individuals may be nominated into administrative positions (tutor, head of department, dean) despite academic rank.

to control the larger social and political environment) (Hunt, 2003:72). This can be seen in the case of Agribo:

Here at NUL I work as a senior lecturer. But I am more than a teacher so to speak, I am also a researcher. I also work on research that is related to irrigation, water and conservation and soil conservation. In particular, I have just gone through the term of headship in my department. During the time, that I was head, there has been quite a bit of influence that I have brought through my department and my dean to start the postgraduate programmes. They had been stopped for quite some time. Now they are going through...they have started actually because of the influence from my...our department. I enjoy this job here. I enjoy working here since then and I never felt that er I have to go away. The only time I went away was to get my PhD.

From the above narrative, it can be seen that Agribo's role identity refers to his awareness that occupying certain positions of power within the NUL structure enabled him to participate in decision-making process involving academic programs offered at NUL. This finding resonates with Lea and Stierer's (2011) claim that academics continue to maintain power and authority and assert their own identities within the changing context of HE. Besides this, Agribo has many role identities which his narrative shows are activated frequently in different situations; hence his role identity has a qualitative and quantitative aspect. Quantitatively he hand continues to occupy different positions in the NUL structure (senior lecturer, ex-head of department and researcher in various projects) while qualitatively he displays commitment and deep ties to NUL and to others through his efforts to re-introduce post-graduate studies.

This is in concert with Jasso's (2003:4) argument that role identities are often accompanied by expectations, competence, enactment, behaviour and meanings and are often situated in networks of relationships with other actors. Another component in Agribo's role self-meaning is relevant here; it seems that it is also influenced by the interrelatedness and coordination of roles between him and the other actors that he interacts with at work. For example, he is aware that without collaborating with colleagues, some of his departments' achievements could not have been realised. This confirms Stets' (2006: 92) view that the successful enactment of role identities in social situations requires actors to be cognisant of, and try to enact role identities that interrelate with the other; so that interaction and role performance can be smooth.

Other findings of the study are that besides working in an influential occupation, some participants constructed their academic identities from the perception that their jobs as academics had occupational prestige: *"I am an associate professor here at NUL. That is my job in essence. It is an important job*

because it is prestigious... it is prestigious...it is satisfying. It gives you that kind of prestige if you like... society looks at you in a different light" (Robert). Here it seems Robert finds his job esteemed and satisfying. This confirms the structural interactionist approach to identities which views individuals' identities as tied to the social structure or socially constructed categories of people and positions. Therefore, it argues that people's identities become adopted as they act on shared meanings in the process of interaction (Katovich et al., 2003:379). Other participants who found their jobs as academics significant said:

I am a lecturer in my department. I think I have an important job. Every job is important...it's a way of earning money to sustain our family and our other personal needs. I arrived here in 2013 as a lecturer. I teach mostly second year and fourth year courses. Sometimes in our department we can change courses especially when others are not here but they are far away in school. So I can teach those. But if I can't, then they hire part-timers or something like that (Teresa).

My job is important actually. I am a professional teacher. I am a teacher... so teaching is okay. I enjoy it. But teaching is a skill that we are not born with. You must work hard to be a good teacher. You must talk the talk, and walk the walk. Don't claim to be one without results that back that you are right to claim so (Hilda).

The above narratives highlight the fact that academic identities are the result of modelling oneself in response to the expectations of others. Hence, Teresa and Hilda's views of their jobs as important and the positive interaction they have had with others in their disciplinary communities helps them construct academic identities. For example, both seem to understand and appreciate their teaching roles and the various experiences it has afforded them; thus their academic identities are a response to reinforcement and encouragement from others in the community (Andersen & Taylor, 2008:94). Their academic identities also arise from self-evaluations their abilities to complete tasks and attain certain levels of achievement or performance (Koumoundourou, Kounenou & Siavara, 2013:270).

To conclude, it could be said that the academic identity of academics who experience 'prestige' in their work derives from every-day and small scale social engagements between people; for it is in these micro-social interactions between them where the answer to the complex question of what identity is can be found (Van den Berg, 2008:1). As such, identities are not localisable properties of human beings. Instead, they are dynamic, open ended and always developing. Identities are also experienced and expressed in different settings, places and times which represent the complexities of social life (Van den Berg, 2008:3). Hence being 'an influential teacher' includes meanings of doing a specialised and

prestigious work and being influential. Thus, academic identities become adopted as academics act on shared meanings in the process of interaction (Katovich et al. 2003:379).

5.2.7 Burn-out

Identities derive from self-concepts or people's entire thoughts, feelings, self-evaluations and imaginations of who they are; thus their identities are meanings that individuals hold about themselves, based on their observations, inferences, wishes, desires and how others act toward them (Stets & Burke, 2003:5). Thus, an identity not only represents an individual's biography of everyday life at a specific time but it also relates to relational behavioural styles shaped by a person's actual life experiences and cultural history (Cote & Levine, 2015:27). The findings revealed that all the participants who experienced occupational 'burn out' in their work constructed academic identities of a '*stressed teacher*'. Using this identity construction, academics who experience occupational burnout make sense of their work from a negative angle. Hence the core feature of their academic identities is 'work frustration and exhaustion'. In this way, the workplace environment, surroundings, conditions and influences at work influence employees' self-perceptions negatively (Kirch, 2008:820), as indicated by Carl:

I'm new in teaching. Because all the other years I've been a manager in Admin[istration]... you know. So I only joined teaching in August 2014. So when I was doing it [teaching] part-time I used to eat into the time of my previous job up there in Administration because I did not have much that I was doing, so there was no harm. When I came here, in fact even before I came here, I used to teach one course part-time. Yes... there were no pressures; it was manageable. But I think since I came here fulltime it has been very hectic... now I'm feeling overwhelmed. I was teaching one course for the rest of the semester last year and come second semester I was given three courses. The challenge is preparation. Ja, it's basically preparation. Before I was teaching one course for the rest of the semester last year and come second semester I was given three courses. That is two more than what I am used to because the other one is a year course so they are semester courses. So it means three courses and I have to teach eighty-three... I think it's eighty-five or eighty-six for one course. One course is eighty-six, the other one I think is forty-something, the other one is twelve. But then as you know... preparing for eleven students is not different from preparing for the eighty-six. This is why I say maybe I'm still new... it's just too much for me (Carl).

From the above narrative, several things about Carl can be observed. Firstly, he was still performing his managerial role in administration while simultaneously taking up a part-time teaching role. Secondly,

Carl justified part-time teaching to himself since he was admittedly 'just sitting around' in his job in administration. So, he decided to dabble in part-time teaching; this clearly worked for him because he found doing a part-time job manageable, with no pressures. In essence, this means that Carl's new role as a part-time lecturer met his goal of finding intellectually challenging work. This confirms the assertion by Morgan-Roberts and Creary (2012:76) that individuals are proactive in constructing identities that reflect their most central sense of self. That is, individuals have the ability to construct identities that are compatible with their own self-conceptions. However, now he feels overwhelmed by his job and this is a clear indication that Carl is experiencing occupational burnout¹⁰ and emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and loss of a sense of personal success (Azeem, 2010:36).

Being overwhelmed by his work is also a sign that Carl is failing to maintain his constructed academic identity, confirming Oyserman et al.'s (2012:73) contention that self identities depend significantly on immediate situational cues. As a new academic, Carl's narrative confirms Duffy's (2013:620) view that the transition into HEIs is often challenging for educators moving from professional backgrounds with research citing lack of preparation for the role, issues relating to academic status and relationships with other members of the academic community. It also confirms Carra et al.'s (2017:1) view that academics transitioning from practice to academia often lack control over their ability to reach performance targets set by the institution.

Further, they are shocked by the intense amount of course work, feelings of abandonment to figure things out for themselves, time required to prepare for courses, requirement for committee work and keeping up with ever-changing technologies and innovative teaching methods. As such, they struggle to balance all their responsibilities, professional and personal lives. Another participant who seemed to be experiencing being overwhelmed by the demands of his work was Amos; he had been a teacher all his working life; he had worked first as a teacher's assistant in a primary school after finishing his undergraduate degree. He worked his way through the ranks in that job until he became appointed as a principal. When describing his job at NUL he said:

I am teaching year one students who are over three hundred and year four students are close to three hundred; they are two hundred and forty-seven this year. So my area of specialty is in education basically. My job here is very hectic indeed because I am teaching very big classes, first year and fourth year... and I don't have time to do my personal research. Maybe that is why I am still a junior lecturer at the moment.

¹⁰ Occupational burnout (a negative experience resulting from chronic work stress) is said to be a response to stressful work conditions experienced by individuals engaged in jobs characterised by high levels of interpersonal contact like lecturing (Salami, 2011:110).

Amos' narrative highlights the effect of new managerialism practices on how academics feel about their work. His statement indicates that he attributes lack of promotion in his work to not having time to dedicate to research. This confirms the findings of Teelken's (2012) study among academics in the Netherlands which revealed that respondents believed that research has become increasingly more closely assessed, particularly through measurement of performance and the ranking of researchers. Amos' narrative further confirms the findings of Feather's (2010) research among lecturers in UK's FECs that lack of time was a major factor for lecturers delivering CBHE as it hindered their endeavours to research. From his narrative, it also seems that Amos attributes his inability to get promoted to his heavy teaching loads. From this, it could be surmised that Amos feels powerless to change his working conditions; thus, he is unhappy and stressed at work.

Research corroborates this finding. For example, a survey by Salami (2011) among three hundred and forty randomly selected lecturers from universities in Kwara State Nigeria revealed that job stress brought by issues like workloads, time pressures, working conditions, and inadequate facilities in the lecturers' job served as sources of stress. The findings further revealed that job stress arose when lecturers' judged their working environment as one that taxes them or exceeds their resources and therefore is perceived as threatening. Other participants who shared similar sentiments about class size said:

Most of us are unable to do what we would like to do because we teach popular programs that students always flood. Every year our program has many applicants for first year. So we always have so many students... so many. It's true that the numbers thin a bit when they move forward due to failures but you find that the next year those who failed move forward which always feels like more students. So that is still not good and you are tired most of the time from these huge classes. Not to mention anything about the stuffiness in the class; it's like the students are sardines (Teresa).

The issue of the class size is demotivating and emotionally and physically exhausting. It is mentally exhausting as well. You teach so many and so few actually participate to see whether they hear you or not. Sometimes it's like you are talking to air. So the huge class...because I am teaching one hundred and forty-seven students and the teaching... I think I can manage even though I cannot say as I would have loved to, because I really want interactive lectures. So a class of one hundred and forty-seven students... if you want a lot of interaction there will be some but it will be minimal. So when giving tests I restrict myself to just two or three tests because the marking takes most of the time of my preparation for the lesson (Diana).

Teresa and Diana's narratives resonate Darabi et al.'s (2017) study among academics in a predominantly teaching university in the UK which found that increases in student numbers made it more difficult for staff to maintain appropriate levels of student support. Thus teaching 'popular programmes causes academics to experience exhaustion and frustration in their work. This finding is similar to Teelken's (2012) observation that academics showed a clear dislike of heavy workloads. This for me implies that the meaning of teaching is eroded by teaching many students as it prevents the academics from doing their work as they would prefer to do it.

For example, Teresa's use of the metaphor '*students are sardines*' further draws attention to the nature of interaction and size of classes at NUL. Diana shared similar views; her use of the metaphor '*talking to air*' shows that teaching and learning are compromised by the large number of students who cannot be as participative as the academics would like them to be. Thus although Teresa and Diana are trying to make the best of a difficult situation, it still remains open to personal discovery to find out for oneself what makes their work meaningful. This confirms Yeagley's (2008:16) view that the work environment directly influences the satisfaction of teachers with their work and profession as improved classroom environments were associated with higher teaching job satisfaction and quality of education.

To summarise, it seems that the academic identity of a 'stressed teacher' derives from the perception that one's work is physically and emotionally draining. This confirms Jackson, Schwab and Schuler's (1986) view that human services occupations such as teaching typically involve high levels of burnout. Thus having a self-concept of a stressed teacher shows that participants' entire thoughts, feelings, self-evaluations and imaginations of who they are is influenced by doing stressful work. Thus being a stressed teacher involves meanings of doing overwhelming and exhausting work. This academic identity represents daily biographies of being hectic, feeling powerless and being overworked (Cote & Levine, 2015:27).

5.3 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the varied yet similar job experiences that influence the construction of academic identities at NUL. In concert with SIT, the findings are that academic identities at NUL represent the work situation, social encounters and situated activity. Therefore the constructed academic identities of a 'passionate', 'competent', supportive', 'multitalented', influential' and 'stressed' teacher derive from lived experiences of work enjoyment, applicability, exploitation, facilitation, multitasking, prestige and burn-out. Therefore, this chapter showed that the construction of academic identities derives from meanings attributed to their work and its setting (Rousseau, 2002:251; Sanderson, 2001:25). Secondly, academic identities are constructed through language, hence academics use phrases such as 'teacher', 'lecturer', 'researcher', 'community worker' to name/describe

who they are and to give their behaviour meaning and purpose. Thus academic identities depict self-meanings that 'feel congruent with the work situation' and which are dynamically constructed in the moment facilitated by 'flexibility of the self' (Oyserman et al., 2012:70).

Overall, the findings of this chapter highlight the view that academic identities are "constructed through individual thought and reflection" (Taylor, 2008:29). As such, academic identities 'pertain to the particular situation' that academics work in. They are situated and describe *who* academics are in relation to others in the situation. Thus, each academic participating in interaction within specific social contexts has a situated academic identity (Delamater et al. 2015:148). It was also shown that the self is not passive; instead, it uses reflexivity to ensure that it is an active agent, participating in the world by taking account of itself and others (Rousseau, 2002:250). Accordingly the construction of academic identities is a function of the meanings attached to the 'lived' experiences of participation in disciplinary communities. Consequently, they are private achievements which require academics (as individuals) to incorporate the diversity of their working environment into the definition of the person (Wenger, 1998).

The next chapter concentrates on how reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations that are tied to membership in disciplinary communities influence work behaviour and the negotiation of academic identities.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS: 'WHAT DO I DO?' STORIES OF NEGOTIATING THE LINKS BETWEEN ACADEMIC IDENTITY, COMMUNAL EXPECTATIONS AND BEHAVIOUR AT NUL

6.1 Introduction

Academics are members of communities which have their culture, histories, traditions, myths, values and practices; thus their identities reflect the norms of those defining communities. Accordingly, discipline-based communities are critical in the negotiation of academic identities for it is here where those who share a passion or concern for something interact regularly and learn how to do their craft better (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1). Discipline-based communities also house assumptions about what is to be learned, task performance, patterns of publication, professional interaction as well as social and political status (Clarke et al. 2013:7; Clarke et al, 2015:23).

Within the community, the academic is an embedded individual (Henkel 2000); that is, he or she is a member of a community and institution that is defined by its own languages, conceptual structures, histories, traditions, myths, values, practices and achieved goods. Thus by interacting with each other regularly, academics negotiate their identities and learn how to do their work better, based on collective concerns, beliefs and values (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1). Therefore academic identities are relational and not independent; they are socio-cultural and emerge and circulate in local contexts of interaction (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005:588).

Therefore this chapter focuses on how cultural role expectations, obligations to others, individual notions of dignity, meaningfulness, respect and self-esteem help academics to negotiate who they are (Henkel, 2005:157) or "*how do reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff*". Here the emphasis is on how the understanding of communal expectations tied to being an academic at NUL influences how academics act in terms of their roles, statuses, membership in disciplinary communities and the characteristics that make them unique individuals (Musolf, 2003:8).

Thus it will be shown that the negotiation of academic identities is not only conventional and idiosyncratic (Stryker, 2008:20) but it is also based on the shared meanings of particular identities and their appropriate behaviours. Academics can also direct their behaviours to generate the meaning that establishes the identities that they wish to claim (Delamater et al. 2015:132).

6.2 Academic Identity as Normative Community Membership

Disciplinary communities are anti-individualistic; they command centripetal forces that encourage member's commitments, energies, time and resources for what the collective endorses as normative and valuable (Etzioni, 2005:5). Since people do not only know themselves through the eyes of others, but they evaluate their worth, goodness and competence through other's eyes as well, they are always motivated to gain the rewarding approval of other people by anticipating and meeting their expectations. Typically this means that people strive to adhere to the norms attached to the conventional role identities that they hold. Hence, they behave in normative ways, albeit with idiosyncratic variations that make their role related behaviours uniquely characteristic of them (McCall and Simmons, 1978). Accordingly, it can be concluded that identities have important behavioural consequences (Hunt, 2003:179).

The key theme *Academic Identity as Normative Community Membership* focuses on community norms as socially approved ways of behaviour which define the roles of academics as individuals (Clement, 2010:55). It also focuses on norms as specific cultural expectations of how to behave in a given situation (Andersen & Taylor, 2008:62). Here the emphasis is on how academics negotiate who they are against the learned and shared communal expectation of *finishing work on time*. The implication here is that academics use the feedback that they received from others during an interaction and compare it with their identity meanings; if the feedback and identity meanings match, they feel emotionally neutral or positive. However, if they don't, academics change their behaviour in the situation to align feedback with self-views (Cantwell, 2016:572).

As such, the negotiation of academic identities represents the many and varied activities through which academics and others interact and forge agreements regarding their identities (Polzer & Caruso, 2008:92). Essentially, the focus is on the action choices of academics as agents and how they are guided by meanings. Since academics' behaviours are also symbolic and convey meanings, once the meanings are initiated, identities are negotiated and proceed in an interaction that leads to a flow of symbols (actions) and meanings (response) (Burke & Stets, 2009:16).

Therefore the key theme *Academic Identity as Normative Community Membership* is aimed at highlighting the importance of shared norms in determining the negotiation of academic identities. It also aims at highlighting the embedded and reflexive nature of academic identities. However, since the process of 'negotiation of meaning' is shaped by the context and the situation, the negotiation of academic identities also entails both interpretation and action (Wenger, 1998:54).

6.2.1 Managing time

The feeling of community is essential for members as it provides them with a strong foundation for learning and collaboration among diverse members (Snyder & Wenger, 2010:110). As such, by interacting with each other regularly, members learn how to do their work better, based on collective concerns, beliefs and values (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1). Similarly, when academics enter the workplace, they find existing communal beliefs about how work should be done; thus they activate identities and work to do their work in ways which give them identity-confirming feedback (Stets & Serpe, 2016:140). Therefore it follows that the work behaviour of participants whose work behaviour involves *managing time* is actually identity work to negotiate their academic identities. True to McCall and Simmons (1978) assertion that identities are distinctive interpretations that individuals bring to their roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39; Stets, 2007:89), the findings reveal that each participant has an idiosyncratic way of managing time effectively at work which represents reflexive interpretations of what an identity means to that individual as an occupant of a position and an actor of a role (Stets, 2007:89). This was seen in Robert's narrative:

Yes of course I am able to finish my work on time. I plan my time. Well it's true that the hours are few in a day when you have many things that you are doing here. Right now I have this pile here [points to a large batch of students' scripts on his table] that I must attend to, and then headship issues, meetings and the like. But I still manage, I still manage to manage. [Laughs]. When I do my work, I am always happy and I find that this helps me a lot to ensure that I do my work well (Robert).

Robert's narrative highlights Henkel's view that an academic identity hinges on obligations to others in the community as well as on individual notions of dignity, meaningfulness, respect and self-esteem (2005:157). Therefore it seems that 'managing time' at work allows Robert to negotiate who he is as an academic; it enables him to adhere to his value of being 'in charge' of the work situation. This endorses the view that role identities are situationally specific (Stryker, 2000:24) and that people have many different selves which correspond to the different positions that they hold in groups (Stets, 2007:89). Robert also believes that his work is a 'true' representation of who he is, and this perception influences his need to ensure that he does his 'work well'. A similar situation is observed for Hope:

I plan my time well. If I'm late for whatever reason, I find the time and finish. I always do. I remember that when I was a tutor I used to leave here after midnight in winter to ensure that the results are ready. Even now I know it will be done if you apply yourself and do it. So I always depend on myself; you can only do that when you know the baseline. I am happy about my job and it is true that there are challenges everywhere but you know, you

cannot take it away from me that I am happy about my job. Yes challenges would be there, but it is part of the job.

Here it seems that Hope associates her ability to finish assigned tasks on time with the ability to ‘*apply*’ herself; this ensures that she does her work in a way that helps her maintain the close connection she feels with her work. Therefore planning her ‘*time well*’ is identity work intended to portray her preferred self-perceptions when occupying a social position (Owens et al., 2010:481; Stets & Burke, 2009:11). Thus it could be surmised that the process of identity negotiation is an unavoidable and unchanging feature of day-to-day life among people (Polzer & Caruso, 2008:91) as people continually attempt to strike a balance between achieving their interaction goals and satisfying their identity-related goals (Swann & Bosson, 2008:449). A similar situation is observed for these research participants:

I am able to finish on time. Yes, but of course nobody said it was easy. Nobody at all. At least a small contribution goes a long way. Some lecturers are not here. They are here, but they are not here. You see them loitering...ok, maybe not loitering...maybe just being, how can I put it? They don't have a reason. Yes that's it! A reason for being here. It's like they are in prison. They just perform like robots. But not all are like that. Some are alive. You see them, you hear them...about them. They are inspiring. So I try hard to do my share, to be here...to make that time for my work, my students and the likes (Edith).

You tell yourself that 'I am going to sacrifice my time... my Christmas vacation' because you already know what it involves... it is the chance to sit down and look at your student's work without disturbances. But that's unfair because Christmas is not a time for working but relaxing. But you know deep down you can't, or else January is here fast and you are now out of sync. You begin the year already with some outstanding balances...the research project (Carl).

Edith and Carl's narratives highlights a similar yet distinct identity work strategies to ensure that they have time to do their work as academics. Edith chooses to ‘*make time*’ for her work. Thus she ensures that she avails herself to her work and students; this strategy allows her to show the commitment that she feels for her job which is central to her identity as an academic. The same can be said of Carl. He sacrifices ‘*his time*’ to ensure that his work is done. This seems to give him a sense of doing the right thing. These findings confirm Taylor's (1989:36) statement that the full definition of someone's identity not only entails his moral standing, but also his or her reference to a defining community. Therefore identity negotiation for Edith and Carl is the result of the continuous struggle between their individual need for self-fulfilment and the demands of the social structure and collective consciousness. Hence identity negotiation for them is contextual (Frenk, 2011:2).

Burke and Stets (2000:5) also add that if people enact or perform their roles well, they attain a sense of control over their environment (Burke & Stets, 2000:5). This is indicated by the following research participants:

Yes, as a person the way I organise myself...I generally, definitely always go through my course outline, sometimes even before the end of the official year. In terms of organisation... it's this thing of personal organisation, time management and understanding with students (Michael).

Yes, I am able to finish my work successfully because I begin my job when the academic year starts so that I finish in time. I have...this is what I have done in the past, and I believe it works marvellously for me. So normally I start early and I am able to finish on time (Norris).

Here participants interpret occupying the position of an academic at NUL as involving being 'in control' of the work situation. In Michael's case, he 'organises' himself while in Norris' case he 'begins' early. Therefore it could be surmised that Michael and Norris consistently engage in work behaviours that ensure that they align their work behaviour with who they are as academics. However, it seems that in their case, the need to finish on time is intended to ease work progression which confirms the view that identity negotiation is intended to ease interpersonal interactions and intrapersonal harmony, where people attempt to strike a balance between achieving their interaction goals and satisfying their identity-related goals (Swann & Bosson, 2008:449). Accordingly, for Michael and Norris identity negotiation is an interactive process where their self-images are influenced by their group culture (Jackson & Hogg, 2011:166).

Polzer and Caruso (2008:93) also posit that individuals desire identity respect rather than identity threat; so they desire to maintain appraisals which give them a sense of consistency and corroboration (Polzer & Caruso, 2008: 93). Ting-Toomey (1999:41) concurs that identity negotiation involves mutual interaction in social situations to assert, define, modify, challenge and/or support own and others' desired self-images. Therefore in order to understand an individual, the domains that he or she deems important must be understood as they influence and shape the individual's thinking, emotions and interaction patterns when interacting with culturally similar others (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 41). This was portrayed in the narrative by Rhea:

I am able to complete the topics on time because I start my work early, in the beginning of the semester. I think maybe it's because I love teaching and I am very passionate about it. You see sometimes during the semester so many things...distractions can happen. So if

*you start early from day one you find that you are less stressed and you are able to finish.
Besides starting early relieves your mind of stress really... so much stress.*

From her narrative, Rhea has a deep-down enjoyment of her job; thus her ability to 'start work early' is identity work to ensure that she adheres to her personal value of being 'dedicated' at work and her identity as an academic. Therefore, it seems that when negotiating her identity Rhea presents a 'face' which represents the positive values that she has claimed to represent her 'self' (Polzer & Caruso, 2008:91). Another equally important element in her identity negotiation is that it is intended to allow her to be fairly predictable and consistent across time (Norris, 2011:34). Other participants reported that their work behaviour was influenced by their ability to utilise their spare time effectively at work as indicated by David:

Yes. I am able to meet deadlines and do my job well. Everybody says I will soon be overwhelmed but I say 'no, I will always manage to perform highly'. There is not much that I do. When I am not in class I can take that spare time and mark, right? So really it's not a big deal for me. It's no biggie at all. Just plan and see what happens and stick to those plans.

As indicated in his narrative, David does not follow the customary expectation of being overwhelmed by work. Instead he 'just plans' and uses his agency at work. This confirms the view that people's identities influence the personas that they adopt, depending on the context and conditions, therefore their identities become more than historical repositories of past actions but they also regulate their actions (Swann & Bosson, 2008:466). Therefore David's need to 'always manage to perform highly' represents identity work to maintain a positive academic identity in any interactional situation (Ting-Toomey, 1999: 40). In contrast, Hillary believes that it is effective utilization of time that helps academics to complete their work on time. For her, tenure is a factor which influences one's ability to finish assigned tasks:

Yes, I can now because I am now working on contract. I don't have as much work as I did. For example when I was full-time I found that meetings took so much of my time. I don't attend meetings now because I am not a full-time member of the department... part time lecturers just come to teach classes assigned to them, and mark them that's all, they don't attend meetings and so on. It's amazing how much free time I have now to do my work. It's really liberating to work like that, to know that I am in control of my day and not someone else. Yes, it's so liberating.

Here it seems Hillary attributes her inability to adhere to the communal expectation of finishing work on time to her work tenure. As stated by McCall and Simmons, Hillary believes she is an academic who is 'free' and this sense of agency in her work helps her negotiate her identity and ensures that she portrays behaviour which confirms her identity or how she likes to view oneself (Burke & Stets, 2009:39). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the issue of time-management at work is so important for participants that Edith suggested NUL should train its academic staff on this issue:

Well, the only thing that can be done is to conduct more workshops on time management. Maybe that we should be able to know how we manage our time properly; even in class how you manage your subject in such a way that you will finish in time. There are courses that are conducted often on how to teach; we might not attend them because we are busy, basically the university academics are doing as much as they can on everything.

To sum up, it seems that the negotiation of academic identities is identity work to ensure that preferred self-images are prominent at work. Therefore participants engage in various strategies to manage their time at work and conform to communal expectations of finishing assigned duties. This behaviour confirms the view that identity negotiation is the result of the continuous struggle between the individual's need for self-fulfillment and the demands of the social structure and collective consciousness.

6.2.2 Working overtime

Wenger's concept '*identities as negotiated experience*' explains how community membership influences academic identities; that is, individuals redefine who they are by the way they experience themselves through participation as well as by the ways they and others reify themselves (1998:149). In terms of the negotiation of academic identities, the findings revealed that participants reflexively interpreted the cultural expectation of finishing assigned tasks by working overtime. First of all, although this interpretation of the cultural expectation seems pragmatic and relevant, it also affects the wellbeing of academic staff at NUL. Noor (2011:241) concurs and states that working overtime diminishes the ability to achieve work-life balance or the successful juggling of paid work and all other activities such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development as well as leisure and recreation that are important to people. Even so, the findings of the study revealed that achieving work-life balance was not a communally held expectation among NUL academics; instead working overtime to finish assigned tasks was the important aspect of academic life, even though it impinged on leisure time:

The work we do here is just too much. Just too much. Now you find that what I do is all the enjoyment that I have. I cannot go to weddings or funerals on weekends... I miss them and

some other important ones and it was not supposed to be like that. As a teacher you must be able to leave your work here and you will see it tomorrow. But I can't. It's always there waiting for me...even when I ignore it. That bothers me a lot... a lot. I can't forget the piles of scripts and assignments so that I can have time for my family; my children and my wife (Amos).

From Amos' account it seems he idiosyncratically interprets his work as '*just too much*', and it is this perception that influences him to negotiate who he is as an academic. Ironically, the negative emotions that Amos experiences are directly connected to his identity as an academic; that is, he views his behaviour as conflicting with who he is and what other community members are doing. Thus, Amos's work behaviour highlights McCall and Simmons' (1978) view that individuals may decide to *rationalise* their behaviour as a defence mechanism against negative feelings (Burke & Stets, 2009:159; Stets, 2007:205). However, it seems that this academic identity is more prominent than his other social identities, thus Amos views his work as '*all the enjoyment*' he has. For me this indicates that Amos cannot divorce himself from his work even though he is aware that it is negatively affecting his family life and social life. Similar sentiments were shared by Elizabeth:

No. not all the time. Sometimes I don't finish assigned tasks on time because I don't want to hurry things, so some things tend to be late because I want it to be quality wise. I will do it quality but now it takes time that belongs to my family. Sometimes I don't know what to do because my kids miss me. It's only me at home, so they miss me a lot. But it's who I am. I can't do things half-half even though I have to be at home. My kids...I talk to them about this and they understand. Plus they are always here after school...they know my time table. They come and we do homework here together and then I will see them later. Sometimes I get home and they are asleep. That's why I enjoy my leave extra.

From Elizabeth's narrative, it is clear that the expectation to produce quality results comes before any familial or communal expectations. Even so, one gets a sense that Amos and Elizabeth are both equally 'saddened' by their inability to spend more time with their children or have more active social lives. This for me further emphasises the prominence of their academic identities. It also confirms McCall and Simmons' (1978) view that people negotiate the differential performances, relationships and interconnections of roles within interaction contexts. This is because individuals do not view themselves as being similar to others with whom they interact but as different with their own interests, duties and resources (Stets & Burke, 2000:227). Thus it seems that identities do indeed have important behavioural consequences (Hunt, 2003:179). This is confirmed by the following narrative:

Rachel: *Yes I do, but it's not easy. You have to plan in advance all the time. For me, I organise my tasks in such a way that I do the marking even after hours and on weekends, so that I am able to finish my tasks on time. But I suffer, I really do. For research well... forget it. Not now. Not now.*

Interviewer: Mm. So why can't you do your work... maybe during working hours?

Rachel: *Because I have many things I do. I teach many students for one. Then I have to prepare for that and mark and do other things... research for topics to be taught in class. It's a lot... right now I have presentations. I must listen and grade, it's a lot. Next week I have recitals with some students of mine. So sometimes I just decide to do it after work and I drive home late at night. Don't ask me about any fears I have driving so late alone [Laughs].*

Rachel's narrative underscores Stets & Burke's (2000:227) contention that in role-based identities other individuals in the group who occupy counter roles are directly involved in the role performance. Since individuals act based on the meanings that objects have for them, meanings are assumed to emerge from shared interactions (Carter & Fuller, 2015:1-2). It also confirms the first subtheme (*striving to reach one's potential*) of Carra et al.'s (2017) study which showed that participants were aware of their 'potential' to become scholars. However, they indicated that this 'potential' was dependent on a shift in academic identity; that is, until one reflected, employed own agency and framed their academic identity to that of a scholar, their potential as scholars would remain undeveloped. Hence Rachel does her work after hours as a strategy to ensure that stays to her true self as an academic; this confirms McCall and Simmons' (1978) view that each role is related to, but set apart from counter roles; therefore proper role performance can be achieved only through negotiation (Stets & Burke, 2000:227). Robert shared similar sentiments:

I am able to meet deadlines because I work hard and sometimes I spent sleepless nights. If I can count them...they are too many since I started working here. But it's what I have to do, to do my duty. A few sleepless nights here and there. You should see the looks of students when you give them feedback they did not expect [Laughs].

However, it seems that this need to work after-hours has less to do with conforming to a role expectation; rather it seems to stem from the need to remain close to what they have been socialised to believe is a typical behaviour of an academic at NUL. Thus, working afterhours is communally learned and shared among NUL academics. Interestingly, some participants associated the need to conform to their community's expectations with job enjoyment and responsibility, as indicated by Daniel:

Every task I am given I do it marvellously. For instance, with the marking, I mark the students' scripts even when I am home, that means I work after hours. If one is dissatisfied, you don't really adhere or comply with the instructions. If you're given deadline, you don't really want to meet deadlines, you just do things for the sake of it. I don't like that part very much.

Daniel's narrative is in concert with Chatman (1989) who states that people tend to be happier when they are in situations that met their particular needs or were congruent with their dispositions. Hence Daniel associates his ability to work overtime to the intrinsic enjoyment that he gets from his job and vice versa for those who cannot. Nevertheless it seems that the communal expectation of working overtime takes its toll on academics' wellbeing, as stated by Leslie:

Yes I do finish but it takes lots of sacrifices. So you find that sometimes you have to come to the office over the weekend, sometimes you have to work at night so as to be able to meet the deadlines. So it's a lot of pressure and it leaves you tired deep down. I remember one day I had the flu and I did not come to a faculty meeting. The dean talked to me as though I was home relaxing somewhere on the beach having a good time, and I told him 'no I was really sick'. He said I should submit proof and after I did he wants to act like he was not really serious yet he was. I then said to myself, 'ok so here we work like slaves its fine. But when we are sick there is a big question mark'. Why don't they ask themselves how one teacher can afford to teach over four hundred students? I wonder what they say about the high student teacher ratios here. I know for a fact CHE [Council on Higher Education] was appalled.

Leslie's narrative validates Noor's (2011:241) claim that work-life balance has important consequences for employees' feelings towards work and its setting. It also highlights Hogan and Hogan's (2015) view that academics often engage in long working hours (an average of about 50 hours a week) due to the nature of their unbounded work. However, it seems that Leslie has some issues with the management style of the university which confirms Gale's (2011) subtheme 'the institution' which revealed that some participants did not view themselves as integral parts of the institution while others thought that the institution seemed to contradict the work of academics particularly at the level of teaching. Consequently, they get drawn into a pattern of working long hours and this is a major source of dissatisfaction associated with health problems and fatigue, as indicated by Diana:

I am still managing to make it but it is tiring sometimes to want to fit so much on a small plate. Just like last week even a break we took... I was annoyed to take a leave to do the marking... I did not do my things. The only day on which I was free was on Friday when

going for a medical check-up but from there onwards, morning and evening, I have been marking...even this morning throughout.

Here Diana's statements show that academics' work at NUL leaves them stretched too thin such that they are not able to balance work and life adequately. This gives her a perception of her work as a 'sacrifice'. Diana's use of the metaphor '*to fit so much on a small plate*' exemplifies this feeling of being overworked. Research corroborates this finding; for example, Kinman and Jones (2008) found that academic work in the UK has become so stressful that it now has serious consequences for academics and the quality of HE. Their findings further revealed that work-life balance is generally poor among academics, with most of them reporting a greater discrepancy between their present and ideal levels of work-life. Other academics shared similar sentiments. However, in their case they engaged in what they termed 'cross nighting' as a strategy to meet the cultural expectation of completing assigned tasks on time, as indicated by the following research participants:

I even cross night to do the marking because of the many students I am teaching. Otherwise if I did not do that they would never get their work back from me. Sometimes you even try to push the tests back or even reduce the number of tests just to have some breathing room. Right now I am already dreading the May exams and it's only March. To mark many students under pressure is not a joke. Not a joke at all (Teresa).

I do the marking even on weekends and also cross night in order to prepare for my lessons or lectures. Also the marks are part of assessment so we...even the students need to see how well or how badly they are doing in their studies. Some really need to pick up their socks there (Marcel).

Yes, I am able to complete my tasks on time because I spend nights marking so that I return feedback in time. Otherwise the students start asking, 'madam, when will the feedback be ready, madam?' So I just make sure that they get it as soon as I can. Then there is peace. Sometimes you cross night marking and they never even come to class to collect their feedback. That one annoys me. It's a rule that they must have their feedback and yet it's not a rule that they must attend classes. Those are the kinds of inconsistencies in policy. We often mark students that have no idea what they are talking about. Not a single clue. And they don't even come for feedback. God knows what's going on there (Marianne).

I do the marking after working hours and I go an extra mile of even cross nighting so that my students get their feedback. It's expected that if they write they must receive feedback

otherwise they start writing petitions and emails to the head or the dean to complain. So I make sure that they get it and I am in the clear that way (Rhea).

The above narratives highlight two issues. Firstly, they resonate Weir's (2013:29) statement that academic identities are the result of being embedded in communities; whereby identifying with particular traditions, groups, or ideological commitments constitutes people's identities. Secondly the narratives highlight Metcalf's et al.'s (2005) view that the number of hours that academics spent at various tasks at work encouraged negative feelings towards work. They also confirms the '*coping with stress at work*' theme in Darabi et al.'s (2017) study which revealed that academics worked harder and longer, especially in the evenings and on weekends.

Besides this, it seems that disciplinary communities and academic tribes provide individuals with a *language* (to 'cross night') which they use to understand themselves as individuals and to interpret their social environment. This essentially implies that academics are socialised into their culture and through conversations, they develop ideas, experiences and deeply held values and beliefs of the community (Henkel, 2005:157). From their stories, it seems that engaging in 'cross-nighting' is a strategy to ensure that they give their students feedback on time. Interestingly, Marianne and Rhea show that this giving back feedback is a communally held and enforced expectation among academics.

However Teresa, Marcel, Marianne and Rhea have idiosyncratic reasons why they cross night in order to return students' feedback on time. For Teresa, cross nighting is a strategy to 'relieve marking pressure'. For Marcel, it is to 'show students their performance levels' while for Marianne it is to 'placate students' while Rhea does it to 'comply with regulations'. This confirms Turner's (1962:24) statement that roles cannot exist without relevant other-roles toward which they are oriented. It also shows that people are capable of creativity and improvisation in the performance of their roles, even within the overall requirements and restrictions of their social positions (Owens et al. 2010:481).

To conclude, it seems that working overtime is a goal-oriented work behaviour born out of the need to finish assigned tasks. In this case, participants work overtime to negotiate their academic identities. The *working overtime* subtheme therefore confirms Henkel's (2000) view that the way an academic fulfils his or her role is strongly determined by the norms of the communities and institutions that he or she is part of. Thus the experiences and behaviour of an academic within the community is social; it reflects the contexts in which academics live. Even so, working overtime diminishes the ability to achieve work-life balance or the successful juggling of paid work and all other activities that are important to people such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development as well as leisure and recreation (Noor, 2011:241).

6.2.3 Self-motivation

“People are motivated to do what they believe is on their best interests” (Bruce & Pepitone, 1999:1). Thus humans universally depend on personal motivation to sustain their efforts in any activity that they engage in (Teck-Hong & Waheed, 2011:75). Motivation is defined as “an internal directional force that activates and energises a person to do something or act in a certain way (Crouse, 2005:15). Essentially motivation has two types; (1) intrinsic motivation or factors that motivate individuals from within such as personal interest, desire and fulfillment and (2) extrinsic motivation or those factors outside people which influence our internal needs, wants and subsequent behaviours such as rewards, promotions and praise (Bruce & Pepitone, 1999:3). Therefore motivation determines the direction of the many possible behaviours in which individuals may engage while doing an activity (Bloisi, Cook & Hunsaker 2003).

Motivation also influences a person’s level of effort or how hard they work. It also inspires a person’s level of persistence in the face of obstacles, as it determines whether they keep trying or give up (Lauby, 2005). Wiley (1997) also adds that besides not being fixed, motivation affects behaviour as it is the result of personal and situational factors. Therefore without personal motivation, situations generally look worse and actions seem to be more difficult (Bruce & Pepitone, 1999:11). This sentiment is exemplified by Anderson who comments that:

The truth is you have to be able to motivate yourself. At this university you need to motivate yourself; if you can’t motivate yourself, nothing will motivate you and you will not enjoy your work and you will not complete your task on time so you have to convince yourself that 'let me be motivated so that I can love do this job.'

Anderson’s narrative underscores Cameron, Dutton and Quinn’s (2003:313) view that academic identities are strengthened when individuals find congruence between their work roles and their membership in disciplinary groups at work, as these will lead to a sense of identity and purpose (meaningfulness). Similar to Bruce and Pepitone’s (1999:1) view that one cannot motivate other people but can, instead, influence what they are motivated to do, other participants believed that being self-motivated at work was a strategy to meet the communal expectation of finishing work on time. “*I guess I am able to meet the deadlines because I am motivated. It not a big deal for me*” (Robert).

Hope also said: *I am satisfied inside and motivated to do my work. So I never had the problem of not being able to finish.* Other participants reported that they engaged in a form of self-motivated work behaviour where they applied vigorous effort to finish assigned tasks on time: “*It takes lots of sacrifices....I have to push*” (Leslie). Similar sentiments were shared by Teresa and Michael:

Much as we have a lot of freedom, I push myself to do the work in time. Otherwise I don't know how I could finish the huge amount of work that I have. CHE¹¹, the students, committee, meetings, minutes all that I have to squeeze in somehow. So I really apply myself to finish. If I can't, I find myself not having peace. It nags me and nags me. So when I am done I always feel free (Teresa).

I tell myself as an individual, I motivate myself that I have to do the work which I like, no matter the limitations of infrastructure, financial support. I realised a long time ago that crying that 'hey I can't do my work because of 1, 2, 3', is a waste of time. It must be done... dark or blue. So I do it, I spend time doing it and nobody can complain to me about the quality as long as it's done. As of now I am able to go through my course outline topics and the objectives that I set for myself. I am able to do that as a person, I can't speak for others... I can only speak for myself. I tell myself as an individual, I motivate myself... that I have to do the work no matter the limitations of infrastructure or lack of financial support. That's what the university cares about. 'Did you do it and finish'. That's it (Michael).

Michael and Teresa's narratives confirm the view that an identity is not a *thing*, but it's a form of identification and connection with and to particular people, communities and ideals. As such, the question, "who am I?" is not about certain social categories, instead is about what and to whom a person feels importantly connected (Weir, 2013:29). As shown above, Teresa and Michael 'push' to finish work on time and this is partly influenced from the feedback received from others in their disciplinary communities that being an academic at NUL requires one to 'push and finish' assigned tasks regardless of structural constraints or other job demands. However, it seems that Michael realises that sometimes the need to finish is not always compatible with quality results; yet he does not attribute the low quality work that may result from hurried work behaviour to himself but to the work situation at NUL.

Even so, it was not all the participants who felt this way. For example, Elizabeth stated that she could not finish assigned tasks on time because she sought to produce quality results in her work. She said: *"Here I am always working. It really seems like I am always working. However much you want to do something ...because I say 'I want quality work', anything that I have to deliver to students or the university also it has got be quality. So there is no rest if the work is not done well"*. Nelson shared similar sentiments with Elizabeth. However in his case, the ability to finish assigned tasks derives from work enjoyment and personal values:

¹¹ At the time of the interview NUL was undergoing accreditation by Council on Higher Education (CHE) Lesotho. As a result many academic staff were involved in getting their academic programs accredited.

Yes. As a lecturer I always complete my tasks on time and the reason is simple; it's because I like my job here and I am happy when I am doing it. So I don't normally find myself not being able to do my work...unless I'm sick or on leave or something like that. But I always feel like 'hey let me set myself straight and do my work when it's time for it'. I do nothing else when it's time for work with the students or the department or other things in my work. I tell myself 'let me focus and do it', so that I can do it well. That's a personal philosophy of mine actually...to focus on my work and give it my best. That always makes me feel good.

Nelson's narrative shows that he is fundamentally content with his work and its setting at NUL, therefore he strives to 'focus' in his work as this not only helps him to complete his work but it also gives him pleasure. However, in his case, the urge to adhere to his preferred self-image seems to come from his value of personal accountability at work. This confirms Sedikides and Brewer's (2001:2) view that role identities are often achieved by integrating with significant others and on tailored bonds of attachment aimed at protecting or enhancing significant others (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001:2). In contrast, other participants indicated that they were able to finish their assigned tasks because they were proactive in their work. This is in concert with Stets and Burke (2009:115) who stated that role identities generally contain a large set of meanings which individuals may use to describe what a particular role means to them. Hence the meanings of a role identity relate to the meanings implied by one's behaviour:

I push myself. I tell my students that I am going to give them a test or assignment on such and such a date, and their feedback on a particular date, and I have never missed it. I always give my students feedback within the time I promised because nobody is giving me a time frame. So in my work I always try to have a set time-frame...to have time-frames for teaching a certain topic for marking tests or marking assignments. I can set and even if I don't meet it I make sure that I'm not too far off from the date that I had set. So maybe it can be a few days or a maximum of a week. Even so, it eats me when I don't meet the deadlines that I set. The other timeframe relates to the submission of marks and those are administrative... they have been set by the administration and I have never missed them (Anderson).

Anderson's narrative highlights Clarke et al.'s (2015:23) view that within the HE structure individual disciplines have their own conceptualisations of success; yet despite these differences, academics possesses common values that transcend disciplinary and institutional boundaries such as academic freedom, individual autonomy, and education of the young. Therefore, Anderson's need to finish work on time is facilitated strongly on his moral frameworks as an individual; thus he believes that giving his students 'feedback within the time' he promised is the right thing. However, it seems that Anderson's self-motivation is driven by the need to adhere to defined timelines in his work. This enhances his sense

of academic self. For me this confirms Ben-Zacharia's (2016:115) statement that self-motivation allows individuals to exhibit behaviour which enables them to satisfy a desire, an expectation or a goal without being influenced by external forces. For Ross (2015:65), self-motivation shows that participants are focused on their work. As such, their behaviour is purposive and represents actions associated with attaining a defined goal. Thus self-motivation is the key factor to work behaviour as it depends on the self-initiative drive and self-beliefs which influence how one accomplishes one's future goals (Ben-Zacharia, 2016:115). This can also be seen in Edith's narrative:

Yes, I am able to complete my work on time because if students are able to write their exams and finish their curriculum, that means I am able to finish my job on time. If students are able to give out their projects and they have completed them in time it means that we have performed as expected. I think it is more of a commitment; it's more of dedication. If you're committed and you're dedicated, then you will complete your tasks in time. If you are not committed then you will waste time because here no one sits on your neck. You can go to Maseru for the whole week...your dean will question you 'where did you go?' and you will put a reason, but find that your students are behind.

Here it seems that Edith views herself as being dedicated and committed to her work and this influences her work behaviour (it increases job responsibility and accountability) to such an extent that she believes that academics that do not have this view of themselves are likely to engage in voluntary work absenteeism which, in turn, may lead to their work lagging behind. This confirms the view that the extent of one's relationships with others depends on being a particular kind of person and playing out particular roles; thus it seems that Edith is committed to being a dedicated and committed academic (Stryker, 2008:20). This negotiated identity has been confirmed by the past interactions which she has had with her students where she found that being dedicated and committed ensured that her students were always on schedule in their academic work. In this way, the identity confirmation process was successful and the salience of the identity reinforced and less likely to diminish (Burke & Stets, 2000:12). Even so, the findings of the present study reveal that some participants believed that they had an obligation to their students and this urged them on to conform to the communal expectation of finishing work on time:

I like students to write tests and write assignments and get feedback as soon as they can. When they performed badly, I give their work back and I say 'come back to me' because I have seen on my mark sheets how they are performing. So I say 'come back and let's see what the problem is' (Hillary).

Hillary's narrative endorses Leung et al.'s (2014:425) avowal that roles are guided and constrained by institutional directives and that they tend to constrain individuals' self-perceptions and behaviour. It also

corroborates Hirsch's (2015:94) statement that when individuals identify with a role, they tend to adopt meanings that accompany that particular identity; they also act accordingly to represent that meaning. As such, NUL academics (similar to others elsewhere) value service to their society through education of the young (Clarke et al. 2013:7), which confirms Taylor's (1989:28) assertion that identity develops when people develop self-images based on values that matter to them as individuals. However, some participants indicated that it is not always easy to remain self-motivated in order to complete assigned tasks:

Here to finish your work you must push yourself and I mean you must work outside the normal working hours. Otherwise... if you were to try to confine your work to the so called office hours, ... I am saying the so called office hours, because you will remember that we got from the university, some other time that...what do you call...the appointments office writing us to remind us that work starts at 8 and that between 1 and 2 it is supposed to be the lunch hour, and ends at 5 [Laughs]. Ok that particular time was for their own reasons but if I were to try to confine my work to those given hours, definitely I was not going to be able to cope (Leslie).

Leslie's narrative shows that remaining close to who one is as an academic requires one to work, to be self-motivated and to work outside the normal working hours. However, it seems that Leslie recognises that this practice disadvantages academics as the university only recognises the normal working hours and may not compensate academics for working outside those hours. It is also interesting to note that Leslie believes that reminders about the working hours from the management are for the management's own agenda and have nothing to do with the real work experiences of academics themselves.

For me, this highlights the disconnection that some academics feel towards their work at NUL which confirms Kreiner and Ashforth's (2004:4) view that individuals can attach meanings to their institutions and that this often leads to a simultaneous identification and disidentification. In contrast, other participants viewed an ideal academic as being motivated by their work. Similar to Cooley's statement, "the imaginations which people have of one another are the solid facts of society" (Cooley, 1902:87); the findings showed that academics work behaviour was influenced by how motivated they perceived themselves to be as indicated by the following research assistants.

The findings of the present study reveal that some participants perceive themselves as being demotivated by their work, as stated by Marcel: *"If one feels a bit demotivated, it has a direct bearing on the time when to complete one's job. If you're fully motivated you're encouraged to work faster, quicker and to meet datelines.* Thus, it seems that motivation is an important factor in the negotiation of academic identities because it influences positive work behaviour. This view is illustrated by Rachel: *"I*

think that when you're highly motivated, then you're able to achieve more than when you are not motivated. So I think the answer is yes, I perform highly because I am motivated and I love my work." Other participants said:

If you're not happy, if you're not satisfied about something then it means you will not be able to do your work accordingly. If you need to take an hour to finish marking the scripts but you have many scripts, it means that you are going to take more than an hour then the next task will suffer (Holly).

Like for anybody, I am sure that my job satisfaction and motivation affect my ability to complete tasks on time because when I am dissatisfied, I am not able to perform my duties as expected, especially if my morale is low (Marianne).

Yes I am able to finish all that I do in time and the reason is simple. You know, when you're not very motivated, that enthusiasm of work is not there because your heart is not in your work (Quincy).

Here the participants' narratives show that job satisfaction and motivation play a significant role in adherence to the communal expectation to finish work. Michael had a similar view; he believed that the inability of academics to finish work on time was due to low motivation and poor staff relations:

Improve staff relations and help staff find out what motivates them intrinsically, otherwise they will always perform low like they do sometimes, well not all of them of course but a big portion is underperforming. You can see the research output here at NUL is so low and we are so many. Some even fail to write and decide to quit because they can't keep up. We need some skills there... seriously we do. Otherwise the university is in trouble. Due to the low intrinsic motivation, people focus on the wrong thing and get demotivated fast when it does not happen as they want it to happen (Michael).

Michael's narrative confirms Snyder and Wenger's (2010:110) view that the feeling of community is essential for members as it provides them with a strong foundation for learning and collaboration among diverse members. As such, by interacting with each other regularly, individuals adopt identities and learn how to do their work better, based on collective concerns, beliefs and values (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1). This confirms the findings of a study by HRSC which found that intrinsic motivating factors such as development and empowerment of workers, participation in decision-making and autonomy may prevent educators from leaving their work in South Africa (HRSC, 2005).

In summary, it was shown that self-motivation is representative of communal folkways, learned from social encounters, where others' feedback to one's actions influences one to act appropriately (Stolley, 2005: 46). Therefore, in this case it was shown that participants reflexively interpreted the communal expectation of finishing work by self-motivation which is a work behaviour aimed at ensuring that others did work according to who they believed they were as academics.

6.2.4 Underperforming

The individual achieves selfhood at the point at which he first begins to act towards himself in more or less the same fashion in which he acts towards other people (McCall & Simmons, 1978:52). This reflexive behaviour is the core of the self (Burke & Stets, 2009:9). As such, identities are reflective self-images constructed during the interaction experienced and communicated by the individuals within a culture and in a particular situation (Liu, Volcic & Gallois, 2015:133; Huang, 2011:219; Ting-Toomey, 1999: 39). Identities also form from social interaction (Balestra, 2012:47). As such, negotiating one's identity should reflect ones expectations associated with a role identity, whether they are conventional or personal. This implies some degree of coordination and compromise between individuals so that smooth role performances can be achieved (Stets & Burke, 2003:12).

The findings reveal that some participants interpret their roles as academics as undervalued, hence they believe that the way they did their work currently did not match who they were as academics. They therefore resort to displaying work behaviours that are designed to match their current self-views. According to McCall and Simmons (1978), this is typical for individuals who wish their behaviour to match their prominent identities, hence they negotiate the prominence of an identity based on the degree to which they receive extrinsic and intrinsic rewards from a role identity (Stets & Burke, 2003:11). Therefore they negotiate their academic identities based on cultural expectations that they should be rewarded accordingly:

Of course I can't finish assigned tasks on time. But it's not my fault, I have realised. I do try but you know sometimes working here can be draining emotionally. You can find yourself angry...sad at how you are working and you then have thoughts that 'I need more money as a person'. Your life is not the way you planned it when you were in school and now when you are working. It's a huge difference in what you thought that you get and how now you are actually living. So I always know...if my salary could be increased, if I were rewarded...on a daily basis definitely that would increase my performance (Norris).

The work here is slow for most of us as lecturers. Most of us. I know and I can tell you that my level of motivation has gone down especially when it comes to the work I am doing...

there are no incentives. Even our salaries are not even encouraging. I need more as an incentive really. Otherwise I don't see a change in the horizon. What can bring that change? Nothing. Nothing can move us to say let's do more and see that things are well. We are trying, but we need more now more than ever. We need that extra money (Amos)

Norris and Amos' narratives resonate the findings of Ch'ne et al. (2010) which found that management support, salary and promotions were significantly correlated with the job performance of academic staff. They indicate that their roles do not match who they are as academics; hence they display work behaviours indicative of altered self-views. When they compare their altered self-views with who their idealised one (of a well-paid academic) they get a discrepancy between these two self-images which impede action (Burke & Stets, 2009:39). This finding confirms Taylor's (1989:36) view that the full definition of someone's identity not only entails his moral standing but also his or her reference to a defining community. As such, Amos and Norris exhibit work behaviour that is in line with their current self-views in relation to their disciplinary community. However, this exhibited work behaviour does not represent who they are as academics. Hence they believe that an increase in remuneration would result in an increase in their job performance. John shared similar sentiments:

No I cannot finish assigned tasks on time. It's impossible because our morale is so low here... even the work has become routine. You feel like you just teach the same thing. It's sad like that. That is not how academics are doing things in other places. I know that they will be reviewing their programmes to ensure that they are aligned with the best practices. But here even the process of reviewing programmes is tedious. I have since realised that it's because we must hate our jobs here at some level. It's like we have to be dragged to do things, we are not light on our feet. We are just doing things without much emotion really. It's sad for me sometimes to realise that about myself. So sometimes I feel that we will improve if we get paid more. You would know that one gets paid this much for teaching 'x' number of students. That would make you happy and perform highly.

John's narrative highlights Leisyte and Dee's (2012:168) view that academic identities are renegotiated and reasserted as academic staff encounter new expectations and pressures in their work environments. As shown in his narrative, John views himself as an academic who has been demoralised by both the 'repetitive' nature of work and working conditions at NUL. He then compares this image of himself with images of how other academics are doing work elsewhere and makes a judgement that the working conditions at NUL are disheartening for academics as a group. The use of the metaphor '*we are not light on our feet*' illustrates this sentiment clearly. In this regard, similar to Norris, John believes the self-images of academics can be improved by increasing their remuneration. Other participants had dissimilar views; they viewed their work behaviour as influenced by distorted images

of themselves as professionals: *"The salaries of us workers here have not been revised recently... actually it's been so many years. I think close to ten years, so that demotivates the members of the staff; the salary should... you know, match the inflation pressures that we are under"* (Marcel). Maxwell added:

The issue of salaries is a burning issue I know. So maybe you provide or pay lecturers satisfactory salaries. That is the form of motivation, knowing that after the year I can do something... but if salaries are low, that is demotivating. It means that I am just working but I am stranded out there, I just work to survive, no accumulation. So when the rainy days come there is no cushion for us as lecturers. No cushion at all. We end up being slaves to banks and 'bo-machonisa' [loan sharks]. So if people can earn something that they can do other things not just work... and at the end of the day you have accumulated nothing. You have just worked here for 30 or 40 years and at the end of that time you don't have anything.

Maxwell's narrative highlights McCall and Simmons' (1978) view that role identities have either a *conventional* dimension (the *role* of role identities) or an *idiosyncratic* dimension (the *identity* of role identities). Here it seems that Maxwell is unhappy with the conventional aspect of his role as an academic. So he idiosyncratically interprets his role as devalued and similar to other service occupations in Lesotho that are low paying. From this perception, Maxwell seems not to feel like meeting the cultural expectations tied to his role at NUL. However some participants were philosophical about the low salaries at NUL as indicated by Quincy's narrative which indicates his perceptions about academic salaries; he believes that academics should not expect to earn high salaries. Instead they should expect non-financial recognition from their work as stated by Quincy:

I would say in terms of pay or money aspect if you join the profession to be wealthy, then you're in the wrong place because there is no money in teaching or lecturing. We are not rich people. So as much as we invest a lot in doing things that we do to impact the society in a positive way we are really not recognised by the society now as influential.

Some participants held cultural perceptions of an ideal academic as working in a supportive work environment. As such, improvements in the work environment at NUL would further enable them to negotiate their identities, as stated by Clark that: *"If we work well in a good environment then I am 100% sure that we will perform highly. Like they say in a family happy wife, happy life, it makes sense that happy lecturer, happy university"*. Here it seems Clark has an image of himself as an academic working in a work environment conducive to teaching and learning; thus he believes that enhancing this imagined self would help him negotiate his identity as an academic.

To conclude, it has been shown that some participants idiosyncratically interpreted their conventional roles as academics as cheapened from the salaries that they were being paid. Hence they displayed work behaviours which matched the negative feelings that they had towards their jobs, confirming McCall and Simmons' (1978) view that individuals negotiate the prominence of an identity based on the degree to which they receive extrinsic and intrinsic rewards from a role identity (Stets & Burke, 2003:11). As such, the work behaviour of participants who underperform reflects the unmet expectations associated with their role identities. Hence underperforming at work is a strategy to achieve a compromise between current and idealised self-images as academics so that smooth role performances can be achieved (Stets & Burke, 2003:12).

6.2.5 Balancing roles

An academic identity derives from one's institution, discipline and personal interpretations of what an academic should be like. Thus as academics make meaning and construct their academic identities, they are likely to develop multiple identities; these include personal attributes, membership in social groups and various work roles (King & Billot, 2016:158). Wenger's (1998:145) 'identity as *nexus of multimembership*' explains the multiple nature of academic identities; he states that identities derive from 'negotiating meanings of experience of membership in social communities'; that is identity connects the 'social' and the 'individual' so that each can be referred to the other (Wenger, 1998:145).

Since academics are guided by the norms of the community and institution that they inhabit, the emergence of embedded or group academic identity is both social and reflexive. It involves judging and making decisions based on a network of personal concerns, values and aspirations (Vandeyar, 2010:917). Similarly, the study findings reveal that some participants resorted to balancing multiple work demands as a strategy for finishing assigned tasks on time. This involves trading off less prominent work roles for more prominent ones; It further implies that in order to balance multiple work demands participants have to find a middle ground between doing their work well and only doing some aspects of their work, as reiterated by Rhea:

I have many things that I am doing here. Ok...so I teach, I do some research and I do community work... although it's not satisfactory at all that aspect. But...well... the students are too many. Really, as teachers here we don't get to participate in things like research as much as we would have liked to. But that's the nature of the job here...you can't be in many places at the same time. So you teach at the expense of research and community work...although at the back of your mind you're always aware that you should be researching and doing community work more. Other places are ok. My old professor is

always surprised that I can't collaborate with him. When I say I don't have time he thinks I am joking and I am not, really.

Rhea's narrative confirms the findings of Adams (2000) study that academics in Australia wished that they had more time for teaching, research and the profession. Her narrative also highlights the working conditions at NUL which do not encourage participation in other academic work roles such as research and community service. However, it seems that Rhea struggles to meet the expectations of only one of her three main roles as an academic due to the heavy teaching loads. Hence, she compromises those other roles in order to meet the communal expectation of finishing work on time. This emphasises the subtheme 'research' from Gale's (2011) study which found that participants did not consider research to be central to their identities; instead it was seen as a major change from ordinary teaching. It also confirms McCall and Simmons (1978) view of an identity as the preferred 'character' that individuals create for themselves as occupants of specific social positions. Hence the negotiation of academic identities is intended to portray academics' preferred self-perceptions when occupying a social position (Owens et al., 2010:481; Stets & Burke, 2009:11). Other participants shared similar sentiments:

While I am still overloaded with these large numbers, three hundred plus, marking is the problem. I remember for the past two years, I did not finish in time; those people who teach they will be saying 'please come for the results and discuss the results'. But because it was in the hurry and I was still marking... and after marking, as the tutor for 4th year students, I had no work on the results of 4th year students (Amos).

Amos' narrative highlights the findings of Feather (2017) among lecturers based in UK FECs which revealed that lack of time was a major factor for lecturers delivering CBHE. Besides this, participants had huge amounts of administration that needed to be undertaken as part of their ongoing duties which not only hindered their endeavours to research, but also prevented them from finding time to manage their courses and cover for colleagues. Amos' narrative further shows that some participants have a difficult time juggling the demands of their multiple roles at NUL. This gives the impression that this affects not only their emotional and psychological well-being but it also strains the relations that they have with others while they strive to meet the expectations of their own roles. Other participants shared similar sentiments:

Besides teaching, my job is that one also of conducting research, doing some other extra-curricular activities. You know, as a lecturer your job is a lot of things, so many things actually. You do the students, teaching, research, sometimes even community services if time allows. So it's a lot. Every day is a hustle. But at least we all know it's for a good cause. If you want to be somebody you must work hard. I'm sure it's nice to be called doctor or

professor, so I feel like 'hey man, just keep pushing.' A little mounts up to a lot in time'. So I try hard to engage in the publishing game from time to time. Right now I have bagged some articles. Now when calls for promotions come, I just tell myself next year I qualify. I can't wait (Marcel).

There are so many things that I do. Just this semester I had to take on... like reporting after workshops and the likes. So it's not easy to complete those tasks because in the department there are only two permanent employees and there is a lot of work. We teach many courses actually that is what I can say I dislike about my job. The pressure here is unbelievable (Hilda).

My biggest challenge...there is always a challenge of time because as an administrator... as well as a lecturer, there will be meetings coming up while I am expected to be in class. So students' assignments will be piling up, me not having time to finish them. Or course an outline needs to be finished and running between meetings and administrative duties and my teaching... that will be a problem (Hope).

The thing for me that annoys me is the many students that I have to teach and then combined with demonstrations...all on me; as I indicated, I am also supposed to carry out research... I don't have time for that so actually I have got... my performance is not up to scratch (Holly).

Hilda, Hope and Holly's narratives confirm the findings of Kyvik's (2013) study which found that academics revised and enhanced their performance by conducting research and getting it published. They also resonate the theme '*administrative loads*' in Darabi et al.'s (2017) which revealed that UK academics were generally unhappy with increasing administrative tasks and wanted some of the tasks to be removed from them, as they perceived it as negatively affecting their productivity and exhausted them. It also highlights the findings of Adams's (2000) study that, among academic staff in Australia, the theme '*time and workload*' was related to participants carrying too many loads and not wanting to add more or new things to their loads. The participants' narratives also show that some participants take on even more roles besides the traditional ones of teaching, research and community work. Consequently, they find themselves under '*pressure*' or '*running*' to finish assigned tasks. As such, academics chose to trade-off and reduce their teaching behaviour, as stated in the narrative by the following research participants:

The classes are so big that sometimes we even compromise what we are giving students. For instance, now we hardly...sometimes we don't give these students the required number

of tests. Under normal circumstances we have to give them the minimum of three pieces of work so as to be able to calculate their coursework. But sometimes you find that you are forced to confine yourself just to two; why because the numbers are so big. You teach a number of courses with large numbers and it becomes very, very difficult (Leslie).

Well due to the big numbers I just decide to cut some things. But it depends on what kind of job assignments...here I don't have many different job assignments. What I have is to teach and I decide which topics to cover but it depends. If time is limited I am free to just decide...I will cut off the topics, but if there is too much time I will increase the topics. So I am not working under someone's target. As a department we sit together and decide on the syllabus...what I need to cover. Yes if I don't cover that content within the stipulated time... the time frame of the semester, I can give out to students some of the topics as assignments (Maxwell).

Here Leslie and Maxwell's narratives show similar but distinct trade-offs in the work behaviour of academics. In Leslie's case, he states that he is 'forced' to reduce the normative amount of work that students are supposed to be given in order to meet the communal expectation of finishing work. In contrast, Maxwell states that he is 'free' to decide whether to increase or decrease the amount of work that he is supposed to give to his students. It is interesting to note that Maxwell believes that he is autonomous and not bound by the community norms. For me this perception derives from the fact he is strategic and able to manoeuvre his work which gives him the feeling that he is in control of his work. Still, other participants stated that they were unable to finish assigned tasks due to exhaustion from their work:

The problem here is that I teach too many students, I don't know what can be done about that but the numbers are too high. It's kind of demotivating. You can find that sometimes you can just delay marking students writing because you are tired and you just don't want work that is draining on your emotions. Marking is so draining especially to mark students who give you back what you taught them. Really, it's tiring (John).

If there was a way to reduce the number of the working hours so that I could have more time to be creative. The working hours are really long; but the money is very little here. As you can see, I got this six year old laptop and the other person is using an Apple MacBook and they look at you. So someone... much as money for me is not the number one real motivator, but if I want to meet targets I find myself cross-nighting. I am not paid to sustain myself on energy drinks, so maybe create more posts so that we have many lecturers and

spread the work and have more time maybe for self-improvement and for research (Elizabeth).

Here it seems that John and Elizabeth attribute their inability to fulfill the cultural expectation of finishing assigned tasks on time to work overload and the resulting exhaustion that they experience. For John, this situation seems to be exacerbated by students' attitudes to their studies while for Elizabeth the cause is the inability to afford the latest technological equipment which will make her job easier and others to share work with. Even so, other participants attempted to illuminate the reasons why academics could not finish assigned tasks on time. In this case, David stated that academics were unable to finish work on time due to the way in which the NUL system operates:

I have observed something. I think that sometimes when one bad thing happens it tends to cloud issues. If there is something wrong with the way something works, then in one way or another it will end up affecting other parts. You know my girlfriend was always complaining that she had a headache. She took pills but nothing changed. So when we went to the doctor they made her take a pregnancy test and yes we found out that the headache was a sign of pregnancy. So even here at NUL, poor job performance is a symptom of something wrong. The question then you could ask is 'what?' And I say simply, 'the system is not working together'. As I said about the time-tables and registration, 'How can lectures teach well if for four weeks or so students are not there?' Well I think that causes problems and delays in teaching. So they will not perform highly (David).

From David's narrative, it seems that he has observed and is convinced that the type of work behaviour exhibited by academics is a symptom of a social ill at NUL; the fact that the system is not efficient and that academics are always having to adjust and match their work to the different situations that they encounter in their work. David believes that unless NUL gets its affairs in order, the work behaviour of academics will not increase or improve. David's narrative confirms Henkel's (2000) view that the academic as an embedded individual is a member of communities and institutions defined by their own languages, conceptual structures, histories, traditions, myths, values, and practices and achieved goods. Hence, the way in which an academic fulfils his or her role is strongly determined by the norms of the communities and institutions he or she is part of. Thus the experiences and behaviour of an academic within the community is social; it reflects the contexts in which academics live. Other participants shared similar sentiments; however, they blamed the way in which the management treats academics on their inability to finish assigned tasks on time:

NUL must show its lecturers that it cares about them. Right now I feel like I am invisible here. Nobody cares about anything that I do. They only seem to care if something you do

is wrong, like if students start complaining that you don't attend classes. So I told myself, 'if they don't bother, me I won't bother them'. I just do my work, it's enough. I don't have to do more if I don't really need to I have seen (Marianne).

No matter how much you would like or even pray for a miracle one cannot always perform consistently and do things according to schedule here at NUL....the university itself cannot keep up to its own set schedules. There are so many things that happen here that take us off course. Strikes, and the like. Delays in registration, Manpower, so many things. I have learned this the hard way since working here all these years. Unfortunately it's something that cannot be changed because it is part of the job. It is the package that goes with it. But even the systems does not take notice of this or of us (Hope).

As shown in the above narratives, Marianne and Hope have grievances against NUL and its management. In Marianne's case, she believes that NUL does not care for its academic staff since she has never received recognition for the hard work that she does but only receives attention for any bad work behaviour. Hence she trades-off excellence in work behaviour for the bare minimum since she believes that nobody even notices any extra effort that she puts into her work. A similar situation is observed for Hope; however for her, she believes that there are many delays that management seems powerless to correct. She believes that this has a trickling-down effect on the work behaviour of academics in that they may choose to let their work behaviour stay the same even though it can be improved due to the status quo at NUL. Other participants also stated that the lack of work aids at NUL did not permit them to perform at optimum levels:

Unfortunately I can't...sometimes it is a bit difficult because the internet is slow and you are in a hurry, you want to download something for class. So sometimes you have to delay some things because of slow internet. And then another thing for me is the noise. Sometimes I have to schedule certain activities when other students are not here so that we can have peace and quiet to do our work. I also wish to have a printer or photocopiers given to us when we need to use them...that will make our job easier. For example if I have to make photo copies for a class I have to fill a certain form then send it to so and so to sign and then have to cue there for it to be processed (René).

If you can't have resources then it means you can't meet your deadlines. For instance an erratic internet that we have, if you want to do research studies within that environment where you are not certain that you are going to access internet there's a problem. If you are going to take more than 30 minutes to get a book from the library then obviously you are not going to be able to meet your deadlines. So...such things.

For me, René and Leslie's comments highlight two issues. Firstly they show that academics' work behaviour depends on their current work circumstances, situation or environment (Rafferty & Griffin, 2009). Secondly, they resonate French et al.'s (2005) view on the importance of organisational support in work behaviour by showing that inadequacies and/or situational constraints at work such as problems with work technology negatively impact their job performance; thus they cannot complete assigned tasks timeously even if they wanted to.

To conclude, it seems that trade-offs in the work behaviour of participants is a strategy to offset competing and unfavourable work demands and conditions at NUL. Participants resort to performing well in other aspects of their jobs like teaching at the expense of others like research and community work. However, it seems that participants also have other roles that they perform which adds to their already full schedules. So the type of roles that academics trade-off depends on the feelings that they have towards them which confirms Callero's (1985:204) claim that role identities stand for objective, not subjective experiences. That is, they represent dimensions of the self that are socially shared, socially recognised and defined by action.

6.2.6 Work assistance

As a group, academics are not only bearers of community traditions but they also find themselves as part of the history of the university, whether they like it or not. Besides this, academics are products of the cultural practices found within defining communities in the university as they provide the cultural symbols (language, myths, values and beliefs) which academics use to understand themselves and to interpret the university's social world (Henkel, 2005:157). Discipline-based cultures within HE are also the primary sources of identity and skills for academics; for it is within these disciplinary communities that assumptions about what is to be learned, task performance, patterns of publication, professional interaction, social and political status within the community are to be found (Clarke et al., 2013:7; Clarke et al., 2015:23).

Similarly, the findings of the study showed that some participants believed that task performance could be improved within disciplinary communities through work assistance, (regardless of whether it was given or not). For some participants, the communal expectation to finish assigned tasks was met without a problem since work assistance was available, as stated by Nelson: *"I have assistants who help me with the demonstrations as well as the marking. So I am able to give students feedback on time and to cover the course outline in time"*. However others received no such assistance, and they indicated that they really needed work assistants as stated by these research participants:

- Rachel: *Maybe the university could employ some people to assist us with marking. Yes, having marking assistants would really help me a lot.*
- Robyn: *No I am not able to finish assigned tasks on time because I teach many students.... because of workloads. So I am not able to give students feedback on time because I am marking huge classes.*
- Rhea: *I think the university should hire marking assistants.*
- Alden: *It is the marking that is difficult because I teach a class of about four hundred students. I need teaching assistants and marking assistants.*
- Maxwell: *What the university could do to help us is maybe to hire marking assistants because teaching is not a problem.*

From the above statements it is clear that participants believe that the teaching loads play a significant role in their inability to meet the communal expectation of finishing work on time. As such, the availability or lack of work assistance was used to negotiate academic identities and work behaviour, confirming Leisyte and Dee's (2012:168) view that academic identities were renegotiated and reasserted as academic staff encounter new expectations and pressures in their work environments. Hence the availability of teaching and marking assistance was sought since it was expected to help participants to negotiate their identities by meeting the communal expectation and finishing work on time. However, unlike Rachel, Robyn, Rhea, Alden and Maxwell, other participants indicated that they had not only seen the need to have assistance but they had also formally requested it yet they had not been afforded assistance:

I am not happy because if I give my students assignments or the tests, even the examinations, I mark alone. Can you imagine marking over 600 examination scripts objectively? That is impossible... I have been thinking a lot how I can be helped with that predicament in my job so I applied for assistant markers but I have not been given one. So this also affects the performance and standards that I set for my students on the type of questions because they are many. So I am not happy (Amos).

For the 2nd year course, that class is normally offered to a large group of students. So if it's a large group of students I wish that I could share it with somebody...I don't like doing practicals. I talked with my head and he said I will be given one. But that was last year. I am still waiting but the work is not so, I guess. I should be assisted by a demonstrator or whatever (Holly).

Here it seems that the unmet expectation of having work assistance is having a negative impact not only on the morale of participants but also on the relations that they have with others in their communities. This confirms Wenger 's (1998:55) statement that individuals negotiate meaning by virtue of being members of a community; that is, negotiation of meaning is facilitated by membership in a community as it embodies the convergence of participation and reification (Wenger, 1998:55). Other participants indicated that they needed assistance in their work since it would enable them to have spare time to focus on other work roles:

We really need to have new lecturers because we will have more people to take on the other jobs. For instance, the eighteen hours that I take at work every day...if they are other people and then they took the other jobs. So the idea is that I have to do it myself ... to be self-motivated everytime because we need most experienced and motivated people in the field. So if other people can lower my hours then I would have more time (Elizabeth).

It's not easy to complete those tasks because you supervise many students and teach many courses as compared to other departments here. If more lecturers could be hired I think that would reduce the stress that I have. The only thing that I can talk of that hinders my completion of tasks is overload, overload is too much. You feel exhausted all the time (Hilda)

From their narratives, it seems that Elizabeth and Hilda would like work assistance since it would ensure that working hours are reduced. However, from Hilda's narrative, it seems that she believes that academic workloads are not equitably distributed among academics. As such, she seeks work assistance to even the workloads. Thus work assistance is sought as a relief from stress that is caused by work demands, as stated by Holly: *"It becomes too much if I have to mark and I don't get time for research. It's teaching and teaching...no time for research, that is what I dislike most.* Anderson shared similar sentiments:

If we can be given tutors, you know other universities have these kind of arrangements where the lecturers can be assisted with tutors. Ja... so because right now I will deliver the material in class right, deliver my lectures and set tutorials and help in those tutorials myself. There are no tutors that are assigned to help us, you know, because tutors can even help you with marking. Without those I will be conducting tutorials, lectures plus tutorials. You understand then I will be providing the students time to consult but with the help of tutors some of the consultation they can manage themselves and the other thing is marking. Ja, I think tutors can help us...they will release a lot of pressure on us and that will give us time to do research (Anderson).

From Anderson's narrative, it clear that he has interacted with academics from HEIs that employ innovative methods of dealing with heavy teaching loads and it seems that he believes that NUL is overdue for implementing such strategies. Therefore Anderson seeks work assistance to lessen the work burdens experiences. However, it seems that Anderson also seeks work assistance since it would offer him a reprieve to focus on other neglected aspects of his work such as research. Leslie shared similar sentiments to Anderson. However, he was more attracted to a system which employed post-graduate students rather than tutors:

When it comes to the issue of numbers, I think it would be wise for NUL to follow what some universities do. In most universities you will find that issues of marking, particularly at lower levels of these academic degrees, 1st year; 2nd year, in most cases it becomes the responsibility of postgraduate students...then you can engage those students at that level, provide them with some little er...honorarium. We have done that at other universities. But now if you have a situation where even the postgraduate degrees that we used to have in the department have been suspended because of the uncertainty at the university at present, it means that even those small things now become your responsibility. It means that more work is piling and this implies that you are not in a position even to try to develop yourself. You cannot read more things... you cannot research because you are now confined. So after a while you find that you become static. Even these kids feel that you gave them the same thing you gave their brothers five years back and that creates a problem (Leslie).

For Leslie NUL's reluctance to provide work assistance for academic staff is attributed to the fact that it is not operating to cater for graduate studies as this would enable its postgraduate students to have teaching experience while working to relieve the pressure for lecturers. He also attributes academics' failure to adhere to other role expectations such as researching on this inadequacy. Even so, some participants believe that the issue of work assistance would never be a reality at NUL as illustrated by Amos: "*Unfortunately it's something that cannot be changed*".

Interviewer: What do you mean it cannot be changed? Have you tried and failed at asking for assistance in your work?

Amos: *Yes. So many times. I have been here for many years. Its management that can ask and get what they want. Us... [short laugh] we teachers are like orphans. Nobody really cares. It's just a problem here. For years, nothing is done. You ask nicely, you ask through protest, it's the same. They say just one thing...'there is no budget'. Budget... budget. Ja. So I am not even blaming anybody because there is no other way around.*

Interviewer: So then does that mean you have never been assisted with work since working at NUL?

Amos: *Yes. Never. They hire new lecturers and admit more students, so you will never feel the new lecturer... that there is someone else helping you with the load. And then my courses are specialised and they say they can't find someone. But I know better. I have produced graduants in that course, they are there. I think they think I am a silly old man. But you know, it's ok. I want to see whether they find someone after I retire. What then?*

Besides the above-mentioned issues, the findings are that another burning issue for the job attitudes of participants was grading students' work due to their numbers as indicated by Maxwell: *"Actually I don't like marking. We have so many students to mark. So a large number of students demotivates the lecturer to mark".* Alden shared similar sentiments: *"I don't think I found this kind of job dissatisfying except for marking which I never liked".* Teresa added: *"The number of students that I teach is making me sometimes to be unhappy and maybe depressed about my job.* Norris also added: *"Truly on my side I am not satisfied...in terms of marking a large number of students. What is tricky again is marking due to the fact that we have large numbers of students. Teaching is not a problem but the problem is marking... mostly because of making many students".* The above narratives highlight the fact that academics do not mind teaching many students, they just mind marking them. But it seems that academics dislike marking many students because it makes them work under-pressure to give students feedback on their performance as indicated by these research participants:

And then there is the marking...this thing of cross-nighting. I know what it means, and just now I am only having this energy drink because I slept only for a few hours last night and if students have to be satisfied, you have to give feedback quickly so that you know where they are and know where you are. That is what I don't like number one (Elizabeth).

I have never enjoyed marking students' work. I don't hate it, but it is too much... it is tedious. The volumes are huge but I do like marking because I talk with students on their papers; I write a lot and I communicate with them. But after a while you get bored, especially when you see the same thing happening. You correct it today and it comes back to you next time... as I see that students are not prepared as far as my field is concerned. English is their second language, they are not ready for university work in English. When I see that students are not catching what I am saying, it's like I could get into them and make them understand as I would like them to. But the large numbers really prevent me from reaching all of them as I would wish; it really does (Hillary).

From Elizabeth and Hillary's narratives it seems that marking many students is exhausting yet it is an effective communication strategy. For Elizabeth it is a way of letting her students know how well they are doing in her course while for Hillary it is a way of ensuring that she reaches '*them as she would wish*'. Therefore they valued giving students their feedback. However, for other participants communicating with students effectively through their feedback was not a reality due to their large numbers:

I don't like marking...I like teaching. For as long as I have been here I have managed to have a deep dislike for marking. It's just too much and we are expected to mark objectively 300 students. That's impossible. Salaries are demotivating and also some of the things you would find is that we don't have the necessary equipment that we want to use to teach the students, that's number two. Number three is that we are supposed to do three things, teaching, research and community work; it is true that the core business is teaching but we don't have enough time for research (Rhea).

Here it seems that Rhea is unable to give her students objective feedback because her working conditions do not allow it. She states that she does not have the necessary job aids to help her carry out her work well as a professional; additionally, the reward systems in her work are not reflective of her as a professional. So it seems that she believes that NUL expects professional grade work yet it does not provide professional grade incentives and working conditions. Besides this, Rhea states that heavy teaching loads negatively impact her ability to perform her other roles such as research and community work. Other research participants who espoused this view said:

As I indicated for the 2nd year course, that class is normally offered to a large group of students. So if it's a large group of students I wish I could share it with somebody...I don't like doing the practical's myself... so I guess I should be assisted by a demonstrator or whatever. Because it becomes too much if I have to mark and I don't get time for research. It's teaching and teaching...no time for research that is what I dislike most. What has also been demotivating for me I think is the large number of students in the different courses; if you go into a lecture room and find that the room is filled with students that tends to demotivate a person (Holly).

Actually, currently I am not satisfied with my job because sometimes I feel like leaving and not working at all because coming to work is like torture because even the time table the way it is planned, each and every day people go to class, there must be time for research and there must also be time for marking. So if you spend the whole week from Monday to

*Friday attending classes you won't be in a position to mark and prepare for other classes.
There are too many students to teach here. It's time-consuming (Maxwell).*

Here research participants' concerns underscore two very important issues among academics at NUL. Firstly, academics at NUL work in increasingly demanding environments; their work is framed by commitments and their duty of creating and transmitting knowledge through research and teaching. As such, they continually experience tension from the demands of these two aspects of their jobs and the rewards and recognition given to them which may lead to counterproductive behaviours (Houston et al. 2006:17-18). Secondly, participants' concerns highlight the issue of the distribution of faculty workloads between teaching and research. It seems that participants struggle with this issue in their daily work as lecturers, a fact which Jonker and Hicks (2014:8) argue further reflects a concern about the productivity of universities, faculty compensation and teaching loads. As Houston et al. (2006:19) state, teaching and research remain the core business of universities globally and this has results in the pressure and stress among academics to meet the expectations of their jobs.

In summary, the work assistance subtheme has shown that some participants are really struggling with the demands of their work and would like to receive more help from the university to meet such needs. From their narratives, it seems that participants wish that NUL could emulate other HEIs and implement strategies that would free academic staff to focus more on other roles such as research instead of teaching.

6.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, McCall and Simmons' (1978) interactional perspective on IT has shown that: (1) identities are the preferred 'characters' that individuals create for themselves as occupants of specific social positions; (2) identities or 'characters' carry built-in cultural expectations which individuals are expected to fulfil as occupants of social positions tied to a social structure and (3) identities or characters allow for the unique interpretations that individuals bring to their roles. Therefore the negotiation of academic identities reflects how academics like to see themselves, given their ideals; thus the negotiation of their academic identities is intended to reflect the priorities that guide their actions (Stets, 2006:91).

Overall, the findings of the study resonate with the view that academic identities are "taken on through shared practices" (Taylor, 2008:29); as such, membership of CoP ensures that academics gradually adopt its central practices (Hoadley, 2012:291). Hence study participants tried to negotiate their academics identities by engaging in learned and shared identity work strategies such as working overtime and 'cross-nighting'. Consequently, they experienced role overload or situations in which their

work required them to exceed the length of time, resources and energy available for the accomplishment of entire roles or work demands (Iroegbu, 2014:84). The danger here, according to Aziz and Vitiello (2015:171), is that academics run the risk of becoming workaholics. Workaholism as a maladaptive work behaviour pattern, compels individuals to work or think about work excessively, to the point where personal activities, family, relationships and personal health are neglected and detrimental health and work-related consequences occur.

The findings in this chapter therefore highlight Henkel's (2005:157) statement that academics are products of the cultural practices found within defining communities within the university, which provide the cultural symbols (language, myths, values and beliefs) which academics use to understand themselves and to interpret the university's social world. It is also clear from the findings that participants use the reflexive understanding of the expectations associated with being an academic to not only further redefine *who* they are, but also to help them know *what to do* at work (Somers, 1994:618). Consequently, negotiating academic identities involves striking a balance between agency and the demands of membership in discipline-based communities at NUL. Therefore this chapter confirmed the view that discipline-based cultures in HE form the basis of academic identity as expertise and assumptions about what is to be known and how tasks are to be performed (Buch, 1999:52; Clarke & Drennan, 2013:7).

The next chapter concentrates on how the (mis)alignment of expectations and real experiences of academic work influence the professional identity of NUL academics.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS: 'WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?' DESCRIPTIONS OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AMONG ACADEMICS AT NUL

7.1 Introduction

Academic occupations are principally professional occupations; they are high-status, knowledge-based occupations characterised by specialised knowledge, autonomy, and authority over clients as well as altruism (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008:258). Since the core of academic work rests on research, teaching, service and community work, their professional identity is indivisible from their identity as academics; thus academic professional identities are also constructed within disciplinary communities and the profession itself (Pifer & Baker, 2014:118; Clarke et al. 2013:9). Consequently, they entail how academics present themselves and wish to be perceived and recognised by others in the broader professional community (Lieff et al., 2012: 208).

According to Lamont and Nordberg (2010:8) "one's sense of self is embedded in the way a professional role is enacted". Thus professional identities not only shape behaviour and but they are critical in the formation of job attitudes within the workplace (Caza & Creary, 2016:6). They also do not focus on who academics are currently but on who they aspire to be in future (Cohen-Scali, 2003:239; Clarke et al. 2013:9). Thus professional identities are both individual, social, situated and play an integral role in academic staffs' wellbeing and productivity (Clarke et al. 2013:9; Lieff et al. 2012:208). It is for these reasons that Bitzer and De Jager (2016) state that how university lecturers see and experience their own professional identity is important as such views influence the way they teach, participate in professional learning activities and attach value to what they do.

However, since academics tend to experience tension from the institutional social context when attempting to develop professional identities (Vandeyar, 2010:917), this chapter focuses on *how descriptions of the (mis)alignment between job facets, individual values and expectations influence meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics' professional self-concepts?* Similar to Lan, Okechuku, Zhang and Cao's (2013: 628) view, the aim is to show that academics' idealised self-images are a function of professional self-definitions, the work environment and the work itself derived from NUL as a structure (seeking to preserve and advance itself as an organisation) and academics as agents (seeking to fulfill their own self-realisation). Thus the main focus is on academics' ability to make occupational choices, based on their own interests against the background of NUL's organisational conditions, culture, demands and constraints.

7.2 Academic Identity as Job Attitudes

The attitudes that academics maintain towards their jobs are often the result of diverse features of their job, including the social status and experiences (both good and bad) from their job environment (Celik et al. 2011:8). Hence, academics' job attitudes should be perceived as the sum of different characters that they bring into the workplace like ascribed traits, socialisation, values and expectations to fill 'empty positions' in the organisation (Wharton et al. 2000:68). Hence Baron and Pfeffer (1994) contend that any sociological analysis of job attitudes should focus on work-groups, social processes, social interdependencies, customs, informal norms and coalition of interests as these are the sources of meaning for the individuals within organisations (Wharton et al, 2000: 65-66). Lacy and Sheehan (1997:307) have a different view; for them academics' job attitudes derive from the nature of the profession itself; hence investigating academics' professional identity in this study focuses on those things which are intrinsic to the academics' work such as teaching, scholarly achievements and the nature of work.

Burke's (1980) cognitive perspective of IT delineates five theoretical properties of identities from an interactionist view of the self. It views identities as (1) self-meanings, (2) relational, (3) reflexive, (4) affecting behaviour indirectly and (5) motivating (MacKinnon, 1994:88). Therefore Burke's approach to IT focuses on the "internal dynamics that operate for any one identity" (Burke & Stets, 2009:48). In terms of academic professional identities, Burke's approach shows them as not only being reflexive and symbolic in nature but also as realised through interaction between actors and others (Burke & Reitzes, 1981:84). Therefore Burke (1991:837) views academics' professional identities as a set of meanings applied to the self as an actor in a social role or situation which defines what it means to be who one is.

The key theme of 'Academic Identity as Job Attitudes' highlights the professional nature of academic identities; its prominence is on '*am I fulfilled in this job as a professional?*' It stems from the collections of attributes, beliefs and values used by academics to define themselves in their work (Slay & Smith, 2011:87). As such, professional identities are the key factors in the way that academics assign meanings to themselves. They help academics to claim the purpose and meaning from their work. They also help professionals to see how they contribute to society (Caza & Creary, 2016:6). The key theme then derives from work orientations as those meanings that academics attach to their work which influences them to view themselves and act in particular ways with regard to their work situation (Watson, 2012:61).

7.2.1 Autonomy

Burke (2004:5) views an identity as a sets of meanings that people hold for themselves and that define 'what it means' to be who they are as persons, as role occupants and as group members. As professionals, academics also expect a certain level of autonomy in their work. According to Hodson and Sullivan (2008:260), "autonomy means that professionals rely on their own judgment in selecting the relevant knowledge or the appropriate technique for dealing with the problem at hand". In this case, job autonomy was found to be a determinant of professional identity among participants as it allowed them to have more 'freedom to determine their own effort and work schedule have high productive levels' (Nguyen, Taylor & Bradley, 2003:3).

In this instance, the subtheme '*autonomy*' therefore relates to Burke's (1980) first theoretical property of an identity as 'self-meanings'. It represents self-determined work behaviour which represents the meanings that participants hold towards their jobs as professionals. It also stresses 'mental empowerment' as one of the factors that influence job satisfaction in that it depicts employees' beliefs in the degree to which they influence their work environment, their competence, the meaningfulness of their job and the perceived autonomy in their work (Robbins et al., 2014:76). This was evidenced by Diana's narrative:

I have always been in the teaching profession, so what I enjoy most is teaching itself, even though it has got some problems in it, in that you will expect students to be hard working but that will not be the case. On the other hand, I could also say it is challenging, in the sense that it is my duty to see to it that students do participate in the way I expect them to. So I should not always blame them, I should also apportion the blame to my own teaching if they seem to lose interest. So I use the eBooks... you know...these electronic books provided on the internet because I do not think students with the amount of money that they get...they can manage the books that I require them to have. So in my teaching, I use eBooks. This means that they can come with computers, cell phones, or tablets... I allow this in my class. But they can only be used for educational purpose, not for any other communication and so I found that as something that eases my teaching.

From Diana's narrative her identity as a professional entails meanings of herself as an educator; where she cares and values high student participation and sustaining students' interest in their studies. Diana's narrative further indicates that her identity as an academic is tied to cultural expectations that she tries to meet and accompanying her position as a lecturer at NUL (Burke & Stets, 2009:39). For example, from her awareness that her students may not have the financial capabilities to purchase prescribed reading materials for her course, she exhibits behaviours such as giving them eBooks and the use of

information and communications technology (ICTs) that allow her students to participate in her class. This finding corroborates Hirsch's (2015:94) statement that when individuals identify with a role, they tend to adopt meanings that accompany that particular identity and act accordingly to represent that meaning. Therefore Diana's professional self-concept is influenced by the alignment between the need to ensure quality educational experiences and the autonomy that her job gives her to ensure that she does this. Consequently, Diana experiences both work engagement and rewarding the on-the-job state of mind that is typified by high energy, dedication and absorption (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008:209). Since she is able to make her own job decisions and to meet her own needs in relation to her work, she feels the role of competence and relatedness in performing her job (Cardador & Rupp, 2011:161). Diana also uses her agency when choosing not to let resource deficiencies at NUL hinder teaching. Another participant shared similar sentiments:

I always bring my own equipment to work to teach students with it. This is because the working conditions are not good, you know. So sometimes you have to bring your own equipment in order to make work more endurable. Right now you can see that in my office this computer belongs to the department. Here is mine [He points to his laptop]. So these are some of the things that can reduce somebody's satisfaction generally for the equipment and other tools that are used are not sufficient. I even have a projector...I carry a projector to class to go and teach and imagine if it gets broken. It's mine, it's personal property. I will have to repair it myself. You see some of the things are actually not in order... I bring mine regardless. The students need this from me and I can't get help, so I help myself in that way (Anderson).

From this narrative, Anderson also seems to identify with his job as a professional to such an extent that he does not allow resource deficiencies to dictate how he carries it out. Hence, he brings his own personal equipment to use as teaching aids in class which corroborates Burke and Stets's (2014:39) view that individuals with role identities may either decide to adhere to culturally defined behaviours or they may exercise their agency and adopt unique behaviours which sometimes makes them unrecognisable to other members of the group. Another equally significant point to make about Anderson's identity as an academic is the fact that it seems to stem from his job as a lecturer in that he finds it interesting and challenging. Essentially this means that he experiences work engagement when doing his work. That is, he experiences a positive and rewarding on-the-job state of mind that is typified by high energy, dedication and absorption (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008:209). Autonomy was also found to influence the professional self-meanings professional self-meanings some NUL academics. In this case, the flexibility and freedom in their jobs allowed them to design their work as in the case of Robert:

Here you do what makes you happy as an academic. Each day you know what you are going to do. You design how you are going to do things, you have the power. In other words you do not just sit there, not knowing where you are going. It is an interesting job. There is a lot of work... sometimes... like now, I told you when you came here that I have deadlines. I have three pieces of work that I have to do right now. So unless you manage your time, it could be stressful. But otherwise you are forever busy. You have all the opportunities to change it, so each day you anticipate what you come across and how to overcome that.

From his narrative, it seems that Robert's professional identity is influenced by his value of being in control of his work, that he experiences alignment between his work and his values. But it seems that it was just not the ability to plan daily events which motivated Robert; he was also motivated by the opportunities available in his job as an academic to grow professionally. The importance of being able to direct and determine the momentum of one's work was further reiterated by Norris. However, for him, his job gave him freedom to teach what he preferred: *"It's different, you do things at your pace... you teach what you like, what you have, so when you do it, like it makes it interesting."*

Nevertheless, Norris' positive job attitudes towards his work as a professional also seem to hinge on work flexibility: *"What I enjoy most with the job of teaching and research its flexibility, there is no other job that is as flexible as this one... I am happy for that part. I can say I am highly satisfied because I love this job"*. Marcel echoed Norris' sentiments: *"Eh... personally I enjoy teaching, you have time to prepare your work and there is also an element of freedom to do what you think is best for your customers being our students. I think I really enjoyed working with schools"*. As indicated by Marcel, autonomy in academics' work implies that they not only have time to organise their work. However, they have the freedom and authority to decide on what is necessary for students to learn. Individual autonomy can also be seen in the fact that academics are free to determine their own promotions at work, as indicated by Diana:

The other thing I like about my job in general is that it is written in black and white that you will be promoted when you have achieved one, two, and three. So it is up to me to organise my time in such a way that I carry out research...so that I can be promoted. I am not in a position to blame anyone in relation to how I perform towards the issue of being promoted. It means that everything is in my hands... except that one definitely meets problems here and there.

Diana's narrative highlights the findings of Eyupoglu and Saner's (2013) study among the academics in North Cyprus which revealed that academics were satisfied with their jobs; however, they wanted work tasks that corresponded to their personal interests and allowed them considerable autonomy in task

selection and decision-making. Eyupoglu and Saner (2013) also found that academics wanted a sense of achievement, facilitated by feedback from supervisors; they also wanted clarity as to what is expected of them and harmony among the various people that they work with. Diana's narrative reveals that being able to plan and execute one's work means that academics are ultimately responsible for their work and its consequences (both good and bad). In this case, failure to plan and allocate enough time for research and publishing means that academics do not get promoted and should shoulder the blame if the opposite happens. This confirms that NUL academics (across disciplines) are similar to their counterparts elsewhere in their value of individual autonomy in their work (Kuh & Whitt 1986:76 cited in Clarke et al. 2013:7).

Having the total academic freedom enhances the professional experiences of academics; it makes them feel competent and enhances their job responsibility. This is in concert with the findings of a study by Zhang and Davies (2011) aimed at investigating the factors that motivated academic staff in Chinese Universities. They found that intrinsic factors such as the sense of responsibility, autonomy and flexibility motivated academic staff. A similar study by Bakanauskiene, Bendaraviciene, and Kristolaitis (2010) among 107 academic staff at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, aimed at exploring the attitudes to work among different groups of employees at the university, found that the amount of job responsibility given and the level of control at work were ranked of average importance on the factors that affected the motivation of academics.

As indicated in the narratives above, academics at NUL look for similar things in their work. They enjoy planning and directing it. They also have set purpose for their jobs, they seek to grow and progress (self-transcendence) from their work. They further seek engagement, achievement and control in their work. As such, finding some meaning in their work as professionals is important, as it enables them to set work goals which make their work interesting and positively affects their work behaviour; this in turn creates their sense of accomplishment and control over their work. It further increases work significance. However, it is interesting to note that valuing individual autonomy among some academics is related to their dislike of close supervision, as stated by the following participants: *'Mm... the freedom we have in this job. Teaching at the university level you have a lot of freedom. No one tells you what to do...you do exactly what you want. Most of us academics enjoy that part of the job I know'* (John). Other participants said:

Another thing I like is the freedom that my job gives me. I don't have an immediate boss who is after me all the time. I can plan my own work. I feel like a professional, I feel there is er...that confidence in me, that I am a responsible person and I try as much as I can to do things responsibly (Leslie).

Okay, for one, we have freedom as lecturers. In this job you are free to do and plan your day as you see fit, no problem. I have really found this environment to be democratic. Eh we have time of course but of course sometimes we are under pressure. You know I really like teaching. We have freedom and time (Teresa).

Here it seems that close supervision seems to take away from the enjoyment of academic freedom as it were. It disagrees with Na, Amzat and Hussein's (2011) findings in a survey to examine the levels of job satisfaction of academic staff in two universities in Harbin city in China which found that academic staff was satisfied with supervision. Nevertheless, it seems the academic value of job autonomy is not a permanent feature in academic work at NUL; it seems some academics are constrained by the NUL structure and have to conform to its demands. For example, some academics indicated that they were unhappy with the scheduling of classes as this prevented them from accessing services or engaging in other activities besides teaching, as indicated by Amos:

But what I dislike about my job is the time table...is the university time table where I teach in the morning... 8:00 a.m. class and wait for the 16:00 p.m. lecture; so almost every day I teach early in the morning and late in the afternoon. That makes me unhappy because I have other things to do. If there were all in the evening or all in the morning I would be happy... or all in the afternoon. I would be happy because we have other things to do besides teaching here. Sometimes one has to go and see the doctor... I have to miss the lesson because the time table is made in such a way that it doesn't give us time to do other things.

Amos narrative emphasises that academics at NUL do not participate in the scheduling of academic events; this not only makes them feel powerless and frustrated at their inability to control the scheduling of classes but it also makes them feel like they have to compromise between their personal needs and the needs of their students. Besides time-table issues, academics at NUL seem to be unhappy about the scheduling of meetings as evidenced by the narratives of the following research participants: *"Even the meetings... some of them are not scheduled... we have just been called to a meeting we never knew about (Daniel)".* Another respondent added: *"Attending so many meetings took away from my time, so that meant I had to come on weekends. If you have meetings but you don't have extra time for teaching, preparing and marking (Hillary).* Similarly, some academics indicated that they were dissatisfied with the scheduling of the current accreditation events at NUL as indicated by a research participant: *"Currently, what disturbs me is this thing about accreditation. Accreditation is a good exercise, but I wish that exercise could be done by other people, not us because it is taking too much of our time...it's accreditation and other things which are taking much of our time (Nelson).*

In summary, the study has shown that job 'autonomy' is a determinant of professional identity among participants, as it allowed them to have more 'freedom to determine their own effort and the work schedules have high productive levels' (Nguyen et al., 2003:3). The findings are that the professional self-concepts of participants were influenced by professional self-meanings of being autonomous in one's work; as such participants enjoyed their jobs because it allowed them to be in control of teaching and learning as well as to have the flexibility to design their own work. Thus, the findings confirmed Burke's (2004:5) contention that an identity encompasses sets of meanings that people hold for themselves and that define 'what it means' to be who they are as individuals, as role occupants and as group members. They also highlight the findings of Eyupoglu and Saner's (2013) study which found that academics wanted work tasks that corresponded to their personal interests and allowed them considerable autonomy in task selection and decision-making.

7.2.2 Accomplishments

Many people are taught to value achievement from an early age in their lives; they are taught that meeting or exceeding social standards of excellence is important. As such, the drive to achieve is difficult to resist for many people (Kumar & Meenakshi, 2009:151). In the workplace, employees become motivated to achieve their objectives when cues related to competing with the standards of excellence become associated with positive results (Deci, 2012:78). In this regard, the subtheme 'accomplishments' also relates to Burke's (1980) first theoretical property of an identity as 'self-meanings.' It represents the intrinsic rewards which influence the meanings that participants hold towards their jobs as professionals. Thus, all the participants whose professional identity derived from accomplishments needed to 'be successful in their work'; that is, their job satisfaction is related to job involvement or the degree to which they identify emotionally with their job and consider their perceived job performance level as being important to self-worth (Robbins et al., 2014:76). Thus past work experiences where they successfully overcame challenging situations and still managed to carry out work duties influenced their professional identity:

Aha, I remember one day... if I remember well...there were a lot of things...but I remember that I ended up having to prepare for a 5 o'clock lecture at 3 o'clock. The reason was that on that particular day I was not in control...you will go to a class in the morning, a class that you have prepared for. During the course of the day you find that your supervisee has sent a document that you feel compelled to look at... you cannot do anything but attend to that submission. So, on that day the concern was already that the pace was slow and there was some time pressure. So I had to look at this student's chapter, comment and then return it to the student. After that... I remember it was three o'clock... after I was done with what I was doing and I had to prepare for a lecture at five. I prepared it, and in two hours it was

done. When I got to class it was just excellent. Even when I went home that day I felt that I had accomplished something. I had a headache that day, but I felt that...it was a good headache (Carl).

Here it seems that Carl (as a professional) is highly meticulous in his job; and this sometimes causes him to work under pressure in his efforts to ensure that his work is done well. For me, Carl's narrative highlights the demanding nature of academic work; something which Houston et al. (2006:18) contend is fundamental to encouraging critical thinking, reflection and collegial interactions in academics. In this case, Carl's narrative reveals that accomplishing tasks under strenuous work circumstances is his identity standard as it reveals who he is as a professional; he perceives himself as somebody who is able to work under pressure and still produce work results that are '*just excellent*'. Thus the '*good headache*' he talks about is actually a metaphor for the sense of achievement that his work gives him. Alex shared similar perceptions with Carl; he was also satisfied by the sense of success that he got whenever he did his work; thus the source of work enjoyment for Alex hinges on the discovery of new things and the sense of accomplishment that follows such activities:

Well I enjoy teaching and lecturing er... I enjoy doing research, particularly the research part you know... it's always...you come up with new things and that's very exciting actually. It's not because you are going to publish it; but whenever you come up with something which has not been done before, it's a great sense of accomplishment, and it's very interesting. That's really the major driving force... you know to do research. But of course when I say this, it doesn't mean that its straightforward to do research... you need to have a lot of materials, chemicals, the instruments all the necessary er compounds... without all these things really... one would be handicapped.

Alex's narrative highlights Akinfolarin and Ehinola's (2014) findings that encouragement for creativity and innovation, appreciation on genuine effort, award with impressive titles and acknowledgement of achievements enhanced the performance of university lecturers. The narrative also shows that being 'innovative' is the identity standard for him as a professional, hence coming '*up with new things*' defines his professional identity. His narrative further emphasises the importance of having adequate job resources for professionals, as this enables them to do their work satisfactorily. Even so, it seems that Alex feels a moral obligation to contribute to scientific knowledge; hence, he enjoys relying on his own judgement and professional autonomy in selecting appropriate techniques for solving problems at hand (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008:262). This is in concert with the views of Chandrasekar (2011:4-5) that job aids (things that make work easier) influence employees' level of innovation and collaboration in the workplace. However, it seems that it is not just work-related accomplishments that influence the

professional identity of participants. For some, it is seeing their students excel in their own professional fields:

When I meet ...er... my former students that have already left the university and you meet them somewhere, whether it's in town or anywhere, and then they tell you that 'ok I am working at a certain place' and they begin to tell you that 'oh we are beginning to appreciate what you taught us when we were in school. We did not take this seriously but now we are er here we are and we are only beginning to appreciate what you taught us'. I think that really makes me very, very happy. Ja... you begin to understand that 'ok I am making a certain contribution to the nation because once you have those guys applying that at their workplaces, it means what they have gathered from you is now trickling down to the nation and I think that is what I like most (Leslie).

Seeing students grow from year one, year two, year three and to graduate..., that gives me greater satisfaction to see that the teaching and learning process can lead to products... it can lead to students who really graduated. Some graduates with first class and others with distinction and that brings happiness and enjoyment...and not only that, when some of them come back to me... to see me and they are grateful for my assistance. So I think that is wonderful. What I find very interesting... what is more satisfying is that you would impact the lives of individuals so that they can change in terms of their mental processes and behaviour to be better people tomorrow who can actually contribute to individual and social development. So to me I think that is the fact...that I can positively impact on the lives of individuals and make them become better people tomorrow (Michael).

Leslie and Michael's narratives highlight Darabi et al.'s (2017) study which found that participants valued their relationships with students and were particularly interested in seeing students' progress and develop their knowledge and understanding. Their narratives also show that their professional identity hinges on how they contribute to society (Caza & Creary, 2016:6); thus seeing and being acknowledged by former students for contributing to their career success is a source of enjoyment and motivation. From their interactions with their former students, it seems that participants equate their students' success with their abilities as teachers and this leads them to feel proud of their protégés' accomplishments. Hence, it could be surmised that some academics at NUL value self-enhancement and achievement in their work; they regard their jobs as being important because they allow academics to experience social status, prestige and personal success (Morin, 2004:5). it, however seems that academics not only appreciate their unique position in realising their students' future aspirations but also in fulfilling NUL's mission as an institution of higher learning. That is, they understand that their teaching roles have an impact in the wider society.

My job satisfaction is very, very high. When I am standing in front of the class teaching, when I am writing articles for publication... in journals. When I heard that my students are being successful in life and when my students challenge me on Facebook and say 'sir this one we disagree with you'. My satisfaction is that I am guiding them in the academic work to prepare them for the future (Alden).

When I see my products, people I have taught and who have completed their studies, when I meet them they say, 'Sir you are a good teacher, you taught me well'. You know...that motivates me and makes me enjoy my job irrespective of the institution where I am working (Amos).

The above narratives resonates Valimma and Hoffman's (2008:266) contention that nations, regions and the global community should aim to transform into knowledge societies as knowledge is important for the nations' socio-economic development. The NUL's Mission Statement also underscores these views; it aims to promote Lesotho's development through innovative teaching, learning, research and professional services leading to the production of high calibre and responsible graduates who will diligently serve their society (National University of Lesotho, 2015: 4). Hence, the above narratives highlight the importance of academics' contribution to Lesotho's socio-economic development. As such, the assertion that academic staff is key in the realisation of HEIs mission and are the cornerstones in the running of successful institutions and educational systems is true in the case of academics at NUL (Shaheen, Sajid & Batool, 2013; Shah et al, 2012; Umur, 2011).

To conclude, it was shown that 'accomplishments' represents the intrinsic rewards which influences the meanings that participants hold towards their jobs as professionals. Thus all the participants whose professional identity derived from accomplishments needed to 'be successful in their work'. From their narratives, it was clear that some participants' sense of professional identity derived from meeting the demands of work despite strenuous circumstances, from the discovering of new things and from being acknowledged by former students for contributing to their career success. For others, professional self-concepts were influenced by the perception that their work afforded them social status, prestige, and personal success.

7.2.3 Learning

The primary goal of university education is the optimal preparation of future professionals (Duta & Rafaila, 2014:802). So, the professional development of university teachers has become critical for teachers working in HE (Duta & Rafaila, 2014:802); it constitutes a process based on the concept of life-long learning. It contributes to the transformation of teaching and determines the efficiency of the

learning process. It also enhances collective creativity, shared values and vision and people's capacities (Duta & Rafaila, 2014:804). Continuous learning further enhances teachers' positive attitudes towards teaching, increases staff capacity, reduces staff isolation and generally creates a productive environment which improves the quality of academic programmes (Hord, 1997:22). The subtheme '*continuous learning*' relates to Burke's (1980) third theoretical property of an identity as 'reflexive' since participants enjoy their work from the realisation that it is transformational and allows them to not only experience something new but it is also progressive and allows one to deepen or broaden one's horizon. Further, continuous learning is cyclical; as one learns, one changes. However learning at the individual level takes time and effort (Sessa & London, 2015:18). Continuous learning underlines 'employee engagement' as one of the factors that influence job satisfaction. It depicts an individual's involvement with, satisfaction with and enthusiasm for the work that he or she does (Robbins et al. 2014:66). Research participants whose professional academic identity developed from continuous learning said:

My job keeps me on my toes because as a lecturer you can't relax, and can't say what I knew when studied in 1980 is something that still works now. You have got to keep on board. As you can see, I have this internet... I have to be on the internet and read journals and all that. I really like the fact that it keeps me up on the rest of things (Edith).

What I like about my job? Aahh... in preparing for the lecture... everything else, you get time to read. Personally, I teach an evolving subject, it is relatively new...so you need to have time to discover or to get the latest information with regard to climate change and technology. That's what I like most (Holly).

Holly and Edith's narratives highlight Adams' (2000:72-73) statement that academics tend to emphasise intrinsic reward in their work; that is they seek to enhance their own professional standards to serve the interests of their discipline, their profession and their students. Other participants shared similar sentiments and said:

Here at NUL we are given chances to further our studies assisted by the university...the university willingly assists members of the staff to further their studies or even to attend conferences which eventually will help one in teaching and learning (Marcel).

The most important thing is the possibility that while I am still here there is a possibility for development on my part than in a non-academic situation. At academia there is that eagerness that I still need to learn more about certain issues. If I leave NUL I will not have time to learn about issues that are emanating from the subject itself. There are a lot of

things. Here I have time to expose myself to so many things ...there are a lot of things that are valuable in the academic situation (Anderson).

I am motivated most of the time when interacting with students. This motivation improves my learning. Before you teach you must make sure that you polish and prepare. You even take a few notes to class to refer to, especially for examples and things like that. So when I teach, I learn. So it's really like...that results in continuous learning (Marianne).

The above narratives highlight Van Winkel et al.'s (2017) findings that participants had an 'evidence-based teacher' academic identity which was based on participants' belief that research would enhance their teacher's standing as role models. Their narratives further indicate that the nature of their work as academics enables their personal need for continuous learning. However, it seems that their constant need to learn about new developments and practices in their academic field is due to the fact that they want to mould the next generation of professionals. For Sessa and London (2015:18), individuals engage in continuous learning because it helps them to modify their behaviour and plan their actions accordingly in social situations. It also expands their knowledge and skills in the areas that they are already experts in and this reconstructs how they interpret and use their skills as academics.

Hord (1997:33-34) shares a similar view; for her, professional learning of teachers is a powerful learning tool that defines good teaching and creates knowledge. For teachers it leads to a higher probability of being well-informed, to professional rehabilitation and to inspired interactions with students. It also leads to increased meaning, understanding of taught content, higher morale and job satisfaction. For students, it leads to decreased drop-out rates and nonattendance of classes, higher academic gains and increased learning as well as fewer achievement gaps between students from different backgrounds. In this way, purposeful engagement in continuous learning among academics helps them to assess what they learn and hones their attention to learning opportunities. It also helps them improve their professional knowledge, competence, skills and effectiveness (Sessa & London, 2015:18).

Equally it could be said that continuous learning helps to keep academics competitive and relevant as professionals in the workplace. As Reddy (2015:1) states, new concepts are constantly being introduced in all the fields. As such, learning allows professionals in technical fields to upgrade themselves on a regular basis; helping them to avoid being stagnant. Mills (2013:1) adds that in many institutions employees' capabilities are constantly evaluated and benchmarked against those of their peers; hence it is important to take charge of one's personal development to protect one's employability. Research also corroborates this; for example a survey by Niace (2012 cited in Mills, 2013:1) found that learning was strongly correlated to sustained employment as staff who undertook learning activities tended to be adaptable and flexible to changing organisational requirements. Conducting research is

another way through which academics learn. Treatises written by academics are primary literature and valuable contributions to knowledge and culture in academic fields and fields of inquiry. Academics frequently engage in writing and publishing due to the academic values of scrutiny of accepted knowledge and truth seeking (Kuh & Whitt, 1986 cited in Clarke et al. 2013:7). Besides this, they engage in writing and publishing to test and discover what they know, to advance their careers, to become more effective in their roles and to get the satisfaction and sense of gratification (Glatthorn, 2002:3-4). This view was supported by Leslie:

I think I can say in the last academic year, I think the level of work satisfaction, to a certain extent has increased. Increased in the sense that er...I managed to achieve some things that I had not achieved before, this is just from a personal point of view. I think I got motivated last week er... last year because I had... I managed to explore, maybe for lack of better words, the area that I had not really taken seriously before, that is of publishing and others. So I managed to come up with a number of articles and think those are some of the things that managed to motivate me. Ok. I feel like now what I am doing is not only benefiting the students but it is also helping to develop me as a person. So I think those were some of the aspects that I really say I got motivated about because if I were not doing this job I would not have achieved.

Leslie's narrative brings to light the view that job satisfaction influences the quality of work and productivity of academic staff (Nyanga, Mudhovozi, Chireshe & Maunganidze, 2012; Anum et al., 2011; Eyupoglu & Saner, 2013; Schulze, 2006; Oshagbemi, 2000; Ch'ng et al., 2010). From his statements, it seems that exploring new avenues in his work is the driving force for Leslie's motivation and job satisfaction as a professional. As indicated in his narrative, research and publishing has opened up academic avenues which Leslie was not aware of in his job; it has benefitted his career and his teaching. As Bacon (2006:27) states, work is more interesting when individuals improve something about their work or when they take on new responsibilities as this influences ownership, engagement, enthusiasm and pride in their work. In this case, Leslie has been able to discover the dual benefits of research and publishing through his work; personally he will get promoted at work and socially his teaching will be informed by his research. For other participants, the informal academic norm of 'publish or perish' is a motivator and a source of idealised self-images among research participants as indicated by Nelson:

Ja...currently I can say I am very much satisfied and motivated by the fact that the current management has somehow tried to level the ground for research, for consultancy and for community outreach programmes and in my faculty of Agriculture there is some kind of competition that is going on. I can call it competition because all of us now want to have some papers being published...want to own funded projects so such things as the

environment are very enabling. That motivates me. I am motivated because of the level ground for research... in particular though there are no resources you know...but the fact that we have the level ground for sourcing out...you know... resources for research and everything have been levelled and anyone who wants to research can do so with no problem that really motivates me (Nelson).

As indicated by Nelson, the need to research and publish seems to be driving interaction between colleagues in his disciplinary community; that is, since NUL levelled the ground for research, academics have been in competition over publishing and everyone wants to have their papers published. Nee (1998:85) contends that although most HEIs formalise procedures of promotions among faculty members that emphasise teaching and research, it is the everyday interactions between faculty members that enforces the informal norm of 'publish or perish' as those who conform enjoy social approval and higher social rank while those who do not are marginalised. Nelson and his colleagues understand this; hence, they all want their papers to avoid formal and informal social repercussions associated with not publishing in academia like not being promoted or being ostracised by colleagues.

It is also worth noting here that Nelson and his colleagues conform to the norm of publish or perish because they have been socialised into their roles as academics by NUL; that is, they were taught appropriate values and work ethics as academics (Ritzer & Ryan, 2011:590). Hence they are convinced that they should conform, regardless of anticipated reactions from others (Clinard & Meier 2016:33). In this case, the formal constraints of promotion have established parameters of legitimate action amongst Nelson and his colleagues (Nee, 1998:86). Still, the findings revealed that identification with research and publishing was found to be so embedded in some academics as professionals that they wished research allowances given to staff could be increased by NUL management, as evidenced by Alden and Michael. They said:

They should give us enough research allowance so that we can publish. They must also increase conference grants so we can go to conferences and you see when you to conferences, you're not going for yourself alone you go on behalf of the University and on behalf of Lesotho. I went to a conference in Hong Kong and that was the first time many people heard about Lesotho. Yes, it opens up this country to the academic world to find out, and I got some Chinese friends who seem eager to visit Lesotho (Alden).

Well I think I could have issues on the level of research support, because I think research support is very important for people to be motivated. You know I think the university could recognise those who carry out such...maybe financially as it used to be done some years back. People maybe... now people write articles for promotion apart from that. So what I'm

saying is there is a need for financial compensation when people write articles, where people write books, where people write chapters of books. Another thing is that people are limited so that is an area of limitation where I think lots of efforts can be done to improve. So this is the area where I think people can be motivated in terms of research, In terms of production, in terms of research output, maybe financial output can be done (Michael).

The above narratives emphasise the fact that Alden and Michael view research as an important motivator for academic staff as professionals; it is not only a promotion criterion but it can also be used as a marketing strategy for academics and NUL. Hence, academics wish NUL could take the research activities of academic staff seriously. For example, NUL could offer financial incentives to academic staff that conducts research and publishes. However, the participants do recognise that NUL academics may have a shortage of research skills; hence their lack of active participation in research.

In summary, the findings revealed that 'learning' influenced the professional self-concepts of participants since it allowed them to be 'exposed to new and relevant knowledge' which ultimately influenced teaching and learning. Continuous learning was also found to keep participants competitive and relevant as professionals in the workplace. Thus it was shown that continuous learning allowed participants to test their knowledge, to advance their careers, to become more effective in their roles and to get the satisfaction and sense of gratification (Glatthorn, 2002:3-4).

7.2.4 Interdependencies

In the context of the workplace, culture affects social solidarity and division of labour between workers; it also has an influence on social interaction and work relations between employees. For example, Richardson (2010) found that workers who spend eight or more hours together for five or more days a week under imposed conditions, found both opportunity and need for interaction; they were also provided with shared experience that created a feeling of community through mechanisms of information, interaction, common experience and mutual support. Therefore, workplace alliances and relationships not only embody positive interpersonal relationships at work but they also facilitate the workers' need to belong within organisations.

In the same way, the subtheme 'interdependencies,' highlights Burke's third cognitive assumption that identities are relational. It also confirms the findings of Lea and Stierer's (2011) research which found that academic identity is constructed in relation to collaboration with colleagues at work. Thus social interdependencies were found to influence the job satisfaction and motivation of research participants whose work attitudes hinged on valuing creativity, professional networks and the interactions at NUL (Donnelly, 2015:549). Here, the focus is on how interdependencies between participants and other

members of their disciplinary communities (whom they frequently associate with) influence their idealised self-images. Due to the nature of their work, academics often perform their duties within work groups formed out of shared interests. They also rely on each other because they hold complementary skills as indicated by these research participants:

Interacting with other people... we are so many here and of different disciplines. I practically got a friend in every faculty and I tend to learn a lot from them. I mean now I can tell you a lot about women in law because I like to interact with ladies in the faculty of Law. So that's the part I like about my job, students and my colleagues (Elizabeth).

I think the job in my view... you know... things that I find motivating is collaborating with colleagues. Just like I told you...I have been teaching in the Faculty of Social Science. Now I joined the Faculty of Science. Err...it's like whenever I have problems... being of content or whatever; I know that there is someone I could call and talk to. So that collaboration to me is satisfying in a way (Diana).

Looking at the above narratives, work enjoyment is influenced by ensuring that students enjoy the learning experience and from interacting and learning from colleagues for it seems that academics as professionals at NUL value collegial community and professional networks. This confirms the findings of Darabi et al.'s (DATE) study among academics in the UK which revealed that relationships with colleagues was one of the most valued elements of academic work, with many participants stating that sharing experiences and support gained from colleagues was an important facet of academic work.. Hence, Elizabeth and Diana find their work meaningful because they work in an environment that stimulates and maintains positive professional relationships; that is they enjoy work that allows them to have interesting contacts, good relationships and ability to have influence (Morin, 2004:8). However, since they have individual accountability and autonomy in their work, they are able to collaborate with colleagues when the need arises. They are also able to focus on their individual goals and aspirations in their work; that is, they are concerned with their own outcomes and purposes for work:

I like teaching, it's my passion. I just love to be here, it's nice being here, being part of this institution. You get to meet different people, and you get to spend time with the professors and doctors and so on and so forth. I also like it when my students participate in drama and theatre and they are passionate about it like I am. You can really see it when they bring their own props from home or when they find interesting scripts and they hold shows on their own and just invite me to watch. Sometimes they even use those funds to buy props that the department can use in the future. Sometimes I feel so touched by that. They don't just want to take, but they also want to give. I taught them that drama is about giving others

joy and making them forget about their life and get caught up in the emotion of the show. I can see they got it. I think they really got it. And when I see them pass because they are very interested in their studies that is the icing on the cake (René).

From her narration, René's positive work attitudes stem from her enjoyment and passion for teaching, which in itself is a source of meaning for her work. Besides this, René values being a member of and interacting with other members of distinct social and professional groups within NUL. However, it seems that interacting with her students and realising that they are just as passionate about her academic discipline as she is has contributed the most to her job satisfaction and motivation. That is, as a professional René can see the consequences of the interaction between her and her students in that they have internalised the values of drama as a field of study. In this way, I could argue here that René's positive idealised self-image stems from the positive relationships that she has with her students and from her perception of her job as being useful to society and others (Morin, 2003:7). Nevertheless, the findings revealed that some academics idealised self-images derived from the cordial relations between colleagues despite the constraints in their work, as stated by Agribo:

You know when you have financial support that is not sufficient, the infrastructure on the other hand is not sufficient but you see that people are willing then you say 'well, I can do with what I have right now'. You see people who are saying 'let's do whatever we can do'. You see? It is encouraging that way when we see it. Even if we are sad...in a sad situation and people are here and they are willing to work and you are motivated in that way (Agribo).

Agribo's narrative resonates the subtheme 'peers' from Gale's (2011) study which revealed that colleagues who shared issues concerning students, teaching as well as offering organisational and emotional support were a major influence on academic identities. From his narrative, Agribo perceives himself to be working in an environment of relative resource deprivation such as insufficient financial resources, infrastructure and equipment. In this way, NUL fails to meet its customary expectation to purchase equipment for academics and this must hinder their work somewhat. However, it seems that academics at NUL have accepted the 'status quo' and have decided to improvise to get the job done despite the challenges in their work. Agribo's narrative also underscores an important issue; as a professional, he enjoys participating with other agents in exploring different options and committing to choices and goals (Becker, 2013:61). However, it was interesting to note that some academics did not experience the lack of resources in their jobs due to the cordial relations between them and management as stated by Diana: "*now in my department... really I think, in terms of minor things, such as getting things like getting pens, getting the ink for printing... clearly no problem*".

Daniel also added:

I may say it's actually high, I think it's high because whatever I... for instance I need stationery, I get stationery, if I need paper I get it, if I need something from the Head I just get it. If I go to class and request students to do something they do it...so except for a few things, you cannot be 100% satisfied".

Here Diana and Daniel do not have problems accessing office supplies; hence they do not have similar experiences with Agribo. This highlights the different work environments that academics at NUL operate under even though they work in the same institution. Another important element in the job satisfaction of Daniel and Diana is the cordial work relationship and interdependency they have with their colleagues which allow them to access resources whenever they need them. But it seems that some academics have not been having such good experiences of working together with others at NUL as indicated by Clark. He says: "*Sometimes this place is like a circus or a place where people take out their frustrations on others. I say this because for a long time I was surprised at the way I was treated when I first came here*". This shows that the working environment at NUL, where some academics feel like they are not treated with courtesy by their colleagues, especially when they are new recruits at the university. This then makes some academics to feel like NUL does not fully cater for the needs of new staff: "

The room allocated to me had no key, I asked for a key but there was no key and I ended up buying myself a key. I mean this is unheard of. Maybe I should have stayed at home and when they ask why I am not coming to work I just tell them 'I do not have the office key' (Clark).

Similar sentiments were shared by Teresa. When she first started teaching at NUL she had not been oriented into her job as a lecturer. She said:

I don't like that we don't have an orientation for new workers here. Even others said they have never had it. It's not only me who was not oriented here. We don't have many courses that train us somehow to be good lecturers. When you come here you are expected to know how to teach and sometimes that is not easy. You learn to cope as best as you can, with practice (Teresa).

Teresa's narrative confirms the statement made by Lunenburg (2011:1) that orienting teachers to their work not only alleviates feelings of isolation, frustration and failure, but it also helps them to understand what is expected of them and the workloads that they are going to work with. As such, management

needs to induct new teachers to their work because failure to do so leads to nearly 50% of potentially talented and experienced teachers to leave the profession within five years (Lunenburg, 2011:4).

To conclude, the findings revealed that 'independencies' influenced participants' professional self-concepts because it allowed them to collaborate with others and to perform their duties within work groups formed out of shared interests even in situations that were deprived of resources and were uncondusive for academic work. Therefore, workplace alliances and relationships not only embody positive interpersonal relationships at work but they also facilitate the workers' need to belong within organisations. Even so, the findings revealed that some participants did not enjoy cordial relations with others since working at NUL.

7.2.5 Work environment

The work environment influences work behaviour; it can also help to develop a positive attitude towards work. It is well recognised that a healthy and inspiring atmosphere leads to more work while an unhealthy atmosphere decreases the working capacity of employees. In HEIs, efficiency depends to a large extent upon how academic staff are motivated, utilised and provided with adequate and conducive environments to perform their duties (Olorunsola & Arogundade, 2012). Therefore, a positive and healthy climate is needed for university faculty job satisfaction. A positive climate can increase a university academic's satisfaction with their occupation through the inclusion of a variety of factors, such as healthy working conditions, relationships with colleagues, support for research and teaching, appropriate salary, promotion opportunities, etc. Furthermore, this also increases the overall productivity that the educational institute fosters (Noordin & Jusoff, 2009).

The subtheme '*work environment*' also relates to Burke's (1980) third theoretical property of an identity as being 'reflexive' since participants reflect on their working conditions and how they feel about working in such environments. Research corroborates this; in 1994 Goodson and Cole found that the broader institutional context played an important role in enabling teacher's personal and professional identities. Coldron and Smith (1999) also found that teacher's academic identity was influenced by the landscape that the teacher was part of (Clarke et al., 2013:10). Similarly research by Basak and Govender (2015) aimed at designing a framework based on the factors affecting university academics' job satisfaction found that their job satisfaction was influenced by working conditions, the work itself, administration policy, facilities, promotional opportunities, individual personal characteristics, supervision and leadership style as well as other factors like job security and workloads. The findings of the study also revealed that the need to continue with infrastructural developments at NUL was a contributor to professional self-images among some NUL academics, as indicated by Hope who said: "*NUL may also have to improve infrastructure conditions so that things are being easy. As a professional, I can't afford*

to work like this. It's about time things changed to be like in other universities". Quincy also said: "the effort to make even the environment more professional makes me like working here. I also see the construction work... landscaping going around. So it's those kinds of things that give me hope to say that change comes" (Quincy). These sentiments were shared by Clark as shown below:

If we work well in a good environment then I am 100% sure that we will perform highly. Like they say in a family happy wife happy life; it makes sense that happy lecturer happy university. So, when I came back to work here I was pleasantly surprised to tell you the truth. This place has grown... well to some extent. Like now...down there they are building new classrooms. They look the same with others. Someone was saying they are like Marie biscuits (Laughs). Still it's something. Space is a rare commodity here so it's welcome, very welcome. So I was happy to see the new beautiful buildings since I left this university a long time ago (Clark).

Clark's narrative stresses the view that professional academic identities are "an on-going process of interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences" (Clarke et al., 2013:9) and in this way, Clark finds meaning for his professional identity from their perceptions that his work and its environment will be transformed for the better (Morin, 2004:8). Being satisfied by the infrastructural developments at NUL indicates that Clark has an *extrinsic* orientation to his work (Zou, 2015:11); the source of satisfaction and motivation do not come within him but come from things that are found in his work environment like upgrades in the physical environment around the university. Similarly, some academics indicated that they were unhappy with their jobs because of poor internet connectivity and lack of facilities in classrooms. These were found to be some of the factors that lead academics to view their work environment as being unsupportive to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge as indicated by the following research participants:

There are a lot of issues that one can complain about. Everybody will want to feel or work in the place that is very enticing you know...I don't know how to explain it, but I think it's very important that when we enter in the classroom there should be equipment and also clean...not only be there but in the clean environment (Anderson).

Just look outside, the environment...the surrounding is dusty; I was expecting to see the surrounding paved because the university is small. And when it's rainy there is a lot of mud. With regards to a good working and conducive environment I can give NUL 5% of my job satisfaction. The university is far below the standard (Clark).

Ja...they have developed Thuto¹² ...I think it's now there but I think we need something much better where we interact and have discussions with students...where students can ask If they don't understand. But students don't use Thuto very well because some don't have access to it...some don't have computers to access Thuto... but I think Thuto can lead to a better direction of instruction (Maxwell).

Here it seems that some NUL academics prefer the use of innovative teaching techniques in their work. This is in concert with the results of a study by Ringe and Pelkki (1998) which found that the use of technological teaching techniques and tools in the classroom was essential as they influenced instructor attitudes and enthusiasm. Besides the use of ICTs in teaching, participants complained that the teaching customs at NUL were obsolete and did not reflect their personal standards, as indicated by Diana: *"Another challenge is the issue of the type of material we use, no technology as such... so resources in general"*. Anderson also added: *"You go anywhere in Free State¹³, the lecture rooms are fitted with equipment that is used and we don't need to bring our own equipment to the lecture rooms"*. Thus, it seems that not having innovative teaching and learning materials influences academics' social identity as individuals. They view themselves as being like other academics at NUL, hence they view their work experiences from the group's perspective. Other participants said:

I think my job is fine but there are problems related to the job...but there are so many challenges on lecturing here because the type of equipment... the methods that we use for instruction are time consuming... its tedious. So just imagine, we don't use the modern methods of instruction like in other universities... they are using projectors, power points, we are still relying on the old methods of teaching...of using white boards for writing and teaching students (Maxwell).

Facilities, in classrooms...sometimes we have to use PowerPoint so that you move faster and do your work effectively. So even if you have your own laptop, projectors sometimes are a problem...you end up having to use the marker, the old style which is also wasting time (Hilda).

Here it seems that academics at NUL find it inappropriate that they work at a university where technology is not used for instruction. It could be inferred from the narratives that these academics interacted with other academics and learned that the teaching methods used at NUL were obsolete.

¹² Thuto is NUL's first ever teaching, learning and collaboration website and intranet implemented to facilitate communication and collaboration at all levels of work at NUL. Thuto is intended to simplify teaching, learning and administration within NUL. The word 'Thuto' means 'education' which refers to the context in which Thuto will be used.

¹³ A province in South Africa adjacent to Lesotho.

So, the lack of 'new and innovative' teaching and learning resources at NUL is causing NUL academics to evaluate their identities as academics. Hence, unlike positive identification based on categorising yourself based on what your academic discipline 'is', it seems that academics at NUL compare *their group* with what is done in *other groups* and from this comparison they dissociate themselves based on what their groups are 'not' (Pratt, 2001:20). By comparing the two groups, academics' need for positive group identity can only be achieved by becoming members of the *other* prestigious group of academics that use technological teaching and learning resources (Dovidio, Gaertner, Pearson & Riek, 2005:234).

In contrast, other research participants indicated that NUL had to update its teaching facilities as this would make their jobs as academics easier: "*We must have available teaching facilities and modern teaching facilities. These days there is no point of maybe going to class each and every time. We should use...maybe adopt things like E learning where I can send material through (Daniel).*" Besides the need to update teaching facilities for the benefit of teaching, some academics are of the view that facilities had to be improved because the current ones did not permit academics to dress formally at work as indicated by Anderson:

Teaching facilities are not good at all. This is not the type... at this era we are still using this kind of equipment for teaching? You can't dress the way you like because you're going to carry a duster... these are used for cleaning the board [he points to a duster on his desk]. Imagine if you're that kind person who wears a tie, you can't carry that because it is going to make your tie dirty.

Andersons' narrative underlines the view that the established rules, policies and day-to-day practices at NUL (Ferrante & Caldeira, 2014:309; Ferrante, 2015:211) channel teaching behaviour at NUL. The structural constraints at NUL also constrain behaviour and individual choice. In the case of the construction of academic identities at NUL, this alludes to the fact that academics are limited in their preferences and this negatively impacts on their academic identities and meaningful work, as indicated by the following research participants:

When I got here there was no projector, there was nothing. Even the laptop, I had borrowed it from the unit up there and when I got here I continued using it. Every time when I went to class I had to go up there and borrow a laptop. Regardless of the weather, even if it was raining, I have to walk up there and borrow the laptop and projector. I teach using power point slides so I have to make sure that there is a laptop. Well let's not talk about that [points to a laptop on his table] it doesn't work, it has been sitting here dead. I don't even touch it. Then there is this printer...it doesn't work. So it means if I have to print I have to send it to

the secretary and ask her to print and then walk over to her office and get it. Sometimes I take it there with my flash disk and print. That is another challenge (Carl).

For me I work with graphs a lot so I cannot keep on doing graphs all the time. If I project them it would make my life easier because I would move faster. Like I told you I am a teacher so I believe in using teaching aids so that students can see what I am talking about. So I believe if I project what I am talking about...it can stay in their senses. For me that promotes learning (Hilda).

As already indicated, Carl and Hilda have preferred methods of teaching in class; but the structural constraints at NUL prevent them from using these methods. This for me brings to light the fact that NUL academics would like to teach and give students quality education and experiences, therefore the inability to teach using technology erodes meaning from work. These findings confirm Slay and Smith's (2011:87) view that professional identity is a constellation of attributes, beliefs and values that people use to define themselves in specialised, skill- and education-based occupations or vocations. It is for this reason that participants feel frustrated at work. A research participant further clarifies the above sentiments:

The expectation, without providing you... without providing us with the necessary materials and things to do our work as lecturers...to talk about quality, to talk about this and that... it's really very annoying. But prior to that, one has to put things in order. If the department or the faculty does not have the necessary budget to grant the department particularly the practical aspect and so on and the facilities, then we may not deliver... you know things that are expected from us. So the expectations and the realities are... do not match. Whatever... we are trying to cope with the existing condition but if things continue like that, really we're in trouble (Alex).

Here Alex emphasises the frustration that academics face in their work when they are expected to produce quality results, yet they are not provided with the resources to enable them to do so. It appears that Alex understands that quality education is a necessity which NUL needs to ensure for its students and academic staff. As Suarman (2015:626) states, when HEIs implement quality education this dramatically increases their ability to provide for the needs and expectations of academic staff and students. Emphasis on quality education will also ensure that HEIs may produce graduates of impressive quality and marketability. Hence, NUL needs to engage rigorously in continuous processes of improvement. Nevertheless, it seems that the structural constraints at NUL not only negatively affect categorisation by academics but it also affects students' attitudes towards their studies, as indicated by Leslie:

Er... you want to think of the resources. The university I think in my opinion is very, very under-resourced. Sometimes you feel that you have to deliver something... you can't. Why? Because technology is down...students cannot access internet. Only a few of them can access internet. You go to the classrooms... er... the lecture halls, there are no facilities and the environment itself is really-really demotivating and that has, I think to a certain extent, influenced the culture among the students. Sometimes you find that only a few students will be taking their studies seriously and sometimes it's really sad to see that these kids seem not to be aware of what it is by not taking their work seriously. You spend a lot of time trying to prepare but then only to find that they do not really appreciate what you're doing. Most of them are just here to get their certificates, not gather knowledge. So I think that attitude is very, very worrying.

Leslie's narrative brings to light Deem et al.'s (2007) study which investigated how a growing target culture brought by managerialism changed the work of academics, and found that universities have transformed from 'communities of scholars' to 'workplaces'. Leslie's narrative is also in concert with the findings of research by Siming, Niamatullah, Gao, Xu and Shafi (2015) among 200 university students in Pakistan; it revealed that experiences provided to students, campus support services and teaching facilities contributed to the satisfaction of students in HE. Therefore having stable and supportive environments in HE is critical not only for academics' job satisfaction and motivation but also for the quality of HE (Mapesela & Hay, 2006:712).

In conclusion, it was shown that the work environment influences the negative attitudes which participants hold about their jobs. As such, working in an environment that is perceived as not interactive, innovative, clean, conducive to learning made participants identify less with their jobs as professionals. Similar to Burke's contention that identity inputs (perceptions of the self in the situation) tell the individual about their environment or what is happening around an individual (Burke & Stets, 2009:64) it was found that there was a misalignment between participants values and expectations and their work environment as professionals.

7.2.6 Students' behaviour

Professional identities shape behaviour, and are critical in the formation of job attitudes, and play an integral role in academic staffs' wellbeing and productivity (Caza & Creary, 2016:6); Clarke et al. 2013:9; Lieff et al. 2012:208). Research resonates this view; for example Mammen (2006) found that students' inability to take their studies seriously and students' poor attitudes towards their studies reduced the job satisfaction of academics in South Africa. The findings also revealed that students' attitudes towards their studies influenced how participants' felt about their jobs. This confirms the view that students'

ability and readiness to learn is an important predictor of academic performance (Shaari, Yusoff, Ghazali, Osman & Dzahir, 2014:11). A research participant whose narrative supported this view said: *"I am also demotivated when students give me some problems... students don't want to do their work, I dislike that because their responsibility lies with me that they pass and proceed"* (Marianne). Marianne's narrative underscores Parry, Blackie, Thompson, Hayday, Greenwood and Parker's (2009:33) view that although teaching staff in HEIs support students extremely well, substantial amounts of contact time occasionally lead students to become dependent on their teachers and they do not develop the skills of independent learning. Other research participants added:

What I don't enjoy most is a very big group of students who do not seem to have an invested interest in their work. Who just come to class and expect you to just spoon-feed them and go home that's it for them. You know when you go to a class of 120 something students who do not prepare for class, who just expect to be spoon-fed, carry on with their lives as if nothing has happened... you know... you go to class and you give them what you can give them, and expect them to go and read and to do research but you find that they don't do so. I don't like that, sometimes it's frustrating to experience that really (Rachel).

Things demotivating me would be when you teach students and you give them your all, and when you give them work they don't reflect that you teach. You put so much effort into it, the kind of outcome you get from them is the complete opposite...that demotivates you and makes you think seriously whether you do what you wanted to do or there is something wrong. What demotivates me again is seeing students who don't care about their studies, who simply regard university education as a ritual, as a formality for them to come here and get a degree and go away (Robert).

The problem here is that I teach too many students, I don't know what can be done about that but the numbers are too high. It's kind of demotivating. You can find that sometimes you can just delay making students write because you are tired and you just don't want work that is draining on your emotions. Marking is so draining especially to mark students who give you back what you taught them. Really, it's tiring. You know sometimes they give you the same examples you gave them in class? It's so incredible how they just take their studies so lightly like that (John).

As indicated above, the students' culture of relying on lecturers for their studies is a source of frustration for some academics at NUL. For example, Rachel's and Marianne's students do not want to take the initiative and ownership of their studies while Robert's students do not 'reflect' his effort in their work. In this way, Marianne, Rachel and Robert believe that their students regard their studies as a *rite of*

passage. This according to Blane (2015:1) is a reflection of lecturers who rely on 'spoon-feeding' as a teaching approach; whereby the instructor provides a large volume of students with all the information they require for their studies. Even though spoon-feeding is the most convenient and efficient way of disseminating information to students, it results in passive learners and also destroys their initiative, independent thought and action. The above narratives further draw attention to the centrality of teachers' roles in schools; they have an impact on the quality of teaching and the school achievement of pupils (Michaelowa & Wittman, 1999:2).

One of the ways through which teachers may motivate students is to promote learner autonomy; that is, they must encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. This involves students taking possession of many teaching and learning practices methods which traditionally belonged to the teacher like deciding on learning objectives, selecting methods and evaluating progress (Littlewood, 1999 cited in Sawada, 2004:106). Failing to do this, leads to students who cannot take responsibility for their own learning, who lack curiosity to learn and become fluent in the material and tend to forget much of what they learned (Blane, 2015:1). Besides the attitudes toward learning, students' truancy was found to influence academics' idealised self-images negatively. Among participants who complained about students' truancy the problem was said to be caused by the time-table and poor student participation in class, as stated by Hope:

What demotivates me is students not coming to class... students not answering my questions, not having venues... not having an organised time table structures. I wish it can be done in a different way. For example when you wanted to go to class and find that there are no students because apparently your class clashes with another class and somebody somewhere is trying to solve that problem... it can frustrate me and I can finally complain about that.

As shown above, poor student attendance and participation in class is a problem for Hope. However, in her case she realises that other factors like timetable clashes could also influence class attendance among students. This finding confirms research by Kearney (2008 cited in Havik, Bru & Ertesvag, 2015:223) which found that truancy in school could be attributed to school factors such as poor academic and social support for students. Kinder et al. (1995 cited in Reid, 2005:62) also found that truancy and absenteeism among students was influenced by individual factors such as lack of academic abilities, family factors like domestic problems and the school setting like poor management and administration which allow students to slip away unnoticed. The concern here is that regular school attendance is not only crucial for students' academic performance but for their personal, emotional and social development as well. As such, by not attending classes students may experience worsening school performance which may ultimately lead them to dropout, to weakened social functioning, to

unemployment and to the need for welfare services (Havik et al. 2015: 222). Besides the issues relating to class participation and academic performance, the findings of the study revealed that students had a problem of plagiarism as stated by David:

I have observed that there is a problem of referencing; this is something that I have noticed in my assignments. Students just plagiarise a lot. Sometimes they don't even know they are doing it. So I am making sure that in my course...when there are students who have problems...that they must be provided with tools that will help them with referencing. I also buy books so that they can photocopy.

The issue of plagiarism seems to be a factor that leads to low motivation in David and he employs several strategies, including providing his students with skills to ensure that they properly reference their work. The literature states that this problem is not unique to NUL students; it is a serious problem that is growing bigger and becoming more and more difficult to eradicate in HEIs globally (Park, 2003:472). Park (2003:474) further states that plagiarism in HEIs is broad in scope, with perpetrators ranging from students (both undergraduate and graduate) to other members of the academic staff. That being said, it is not only the above stated issues that seem to negatively influence the motivation of academics at NUL. Another burning issue is that of student protests, as stated by the following research participants:

Oh I don't like it when the students take a strike. I don't like that one because I find that the students don't understand how they should behave themselves during the strikes. I don't like that one because it's like they were told 'go and break that, go and make that man unhappy'. And then you see them sometimes really saying 'it's the bursar keeping our money there'. And then you see another person pulling a tank, rolling a wheel, burning tyres around and you know that it's not a motivating environment in that sense. You know... they fight instead of taking a peaceful strike (Agribo).

You know other things like students going on strikes and lectures being suspended for a week. The staff residence issues, the housing situation; it's dilapidated, things are breaking down there, sometimes we go for days without water when you go to explain to maintenance and they are not taken care of when you go to them maybe because of the language barrier, maybe because they are not happy that you are speaking to them in English. They are minor things though they are challenges but we are dealing with them (Quincy).

As shown above, the issue of student protests seems to be central in the demotivation of Agribo. This issue, according to Abeles (2016), is a result of long-festering concerns about rights, access and

economics. For example, the Lesotho Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2014:46) reported that eight out of thirteen institutions in Lesotho reported having students' strikes in the period between 2010 and 2013. The main causes of students' strikes were reportedly due to programme design issues and delays of in student allowances from NMDS¹⁴. Similarly, in the neighbouring South Africa, the recent violent clashes within its universities were caused principally by conflict over tuition fees, shortage of student accommodation, low-paid staff and the language of instruction (Hall, 2016). As Agribo describes them, student clashes at NUL are typically violent and this, according to Hall (2016), is characteristic of youth anger within universities. Nevertheless, the above mentioned issues seem to be important enough to demotivate Rachel, Robert, Marianne and Hope because they have a relational orientation to their work. That is, these participants have an orientation towards other people at work. They also consider their employment to be a service to NUL; as such, they infuse their work with their values; hence, they disapprove of students not taking their studies seriously. But it seems that it is not just an issue of academic performance that de-motivates academics; for some, the problem is with timetables, truancy and poor student participation in class, as stated by Hope:

What demotivates me is students not coming to class... students not answering my questions, not having venues... not having organised time table structures. I wish it can be done in a different way. For example, when you want to go to class and find that there are no students because apparently your class clashes with another class and somebody somewhere is trying to solve that problem... it can frustrate me and I can finally complain about that.

As shown above, poor student attendance and participation in class are problematic for Hope. However, in her case, she realises that other factors like timetable clashes could also influence class attendance among students. This finding confirms research by Kearney (2008 cited in Havik et al., 2015:223) which found that truancy in school could be attributed to school factors such as poor academic and social support for students. The concern here is that regular school attendance is not only crucial for students' academic performance but it is also crucial for their personal, emotional and social development. This point is highlighted by Diana:

In fact, for some the issue of missing it [the class] is tutorials and lectures... even though currently it does not happen that much. You can find out that probably in the class maybe of one hundred and forty-seven maybe four or five students are not in. That I discovered

¹⁴ National Manpower Development Secretariat is under the Ministry of Finance and is in charge of Lesotho's student loan bursaries.

when giving them test scripts because they are so many that one cannot see when 4 or 5 are missing, so that is a big challenge.

As such, by not attending classes students may experience worsening academic performance which may ultimately lead to dropouts, weakened social functioning, unemployment and the need for welfare services (Havik et al. 2015: 222). But it seems that large classes also encourage truancy among students. This for me underlines King and Billot's (2016:158) view that academic life is difficult and the perceived and experienced difficulties that academics face emanate chiefly from the disjuncture between the 'imagined' academic life and the 'reality' that is experienced (King & Billot, 2016:158).

In summary, the subtheme 'students,' showed that students' attitudes towards their studies influenced how academics felt about their jobs. The findings revealed that NUL had a student culture of relying on lecturers (and not on themselves) for their studies. This is a source of frustration for some academics at NUL. Poor student attendance and participation in class, plagiarism, recurrent student strikes and marking many students' scripts were found to be major sources of negative job attitudes among participants as professionals. As such, the findings showed that participants continually experience tension from the demands of their jobs as professionals. Overall, this subtheme resonates the subtheme 'teaching' in Gale's (2011) study which found that participants saw students as a significant factor for their academic identities as teachers. Thus despite teaching large class sizes, participants reported enjoying their working relationships with students.

7.2.7 Recognition

Incentives refer to those things which stimulate individuals into action in the desired direction; hence incentives have motivational powers (Khanka, 2003:196). Recognition is the acknowledgement or appreciation of the positive accomplishments or behaviours of individuals in the workplace (Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013: 3). As a process, recognition involves describing the value of employees' work and evaluating how much appreciation is received in return (Danish, 2010:162). It is given as non-monetary and monetary incentives for selected desirable behaviours in the workplace. Thus the subtheme 'recognition' resonates 'perceived organisational support' which relates to the degree to which employees believe that the organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Robbins et al. 2009: 76). Research corroborates this view; for example a study by Sharma and Jyoti's (2009) indicated that there was a positive relationship between management, colleague's attitude, growth opportunities, recognition and job satisfaction of academics in India. Recently, Amarasena, Ajward and Ahasanul Haque (2015:543) found that social recognition was a highly significant positive factor affecting the overall faculty job satisfaction of academics from fifteen state universities in Sri Lanka. Similar to workers in other organisations elsewhere, NUL academics were found to respond

positively to either financial or non-financial incentives. In terms of non-financial incentives, it seems that the symbolic (intangible) value of recognition is the most motivating aspect for research participants as indicated in the narratives below:

I like my job because I like teaching and interacting with students. But also, because of my job, I managed to be exposed to a lot of things that I would have otherwise not been exposed to. For instance, if we want to talk about eh...what happened during the...eh...the period prior to the 2012 elections, people were making a lot of use of university personnel especially from my department. I think that in a way some sort of... it provided some sort of satisfaction in the sense that we began...I began to realise that the...eh... outside world was appreciating what we are doing as a department even at a personal level. And I think that was really motivating (Leslie).

Let me first start with my previous jobs. The first one...in the civil service, it was so applicable... it was so practical. I think if I have to rank...I like that the most. There, I was doing research... I liked it the best. So moving on to another job ... in a different ministry, it was so abstract...not that interesting. Then going to another university... again I was teaching the courses that I did not like. But here at NUL its better; I have not yet got into many parts of the job yet...but at least I feel appreciated here and I like it. I can plan for my work... I do feel like I make a contribution in my work. Teaching is the one that I like the most... but I hate the marking... but I like teaching, when I have time to mingle with the students that is another motivation (Teresa).

Here it seems that the professional identity of some academics at NUL is influenced by feeling appreciated by others from within and outside NUL for the good work that they do, confirming Khanka's (2003:196) view that appreciation or praise for work done satisfies peoples' egos. Popescu, Bulei and Mihalcioiu's (2014:907) view that the concept of professional identity has a symbolic and social aspect is also confirmed. As such, it seems that recognition helps to build the feelings of confidence and satisfaction in individuals.

The above narratives further confirm the findings of a study by Bakanauskiene et al. (2010) among 107 academic staff at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, aimed at exploring attitudes to work among different groups of employees at the university. The findings of that research revealed that public attitudes toward the academic profession, the relationships between academics and their fellow workers, and the nature of the work that they do were ranked highest by academic staff as factors that contributed to their work motivation. Nonetheless, there were some academics that were more focused on financial recognition as a source of job satisfaction, as indicated by David:

Well things are really going well for me at the moment so I have no problems. I am still adapting. Maybe I am enthusiastic being new and all that. Well, I have heard colleagues complaining...but for me now there are no issues. Since working I find that I can meet my needs no problems there. I am expecting a little one soon and my significant other has a job. I find that we can save money for our future plans. So I am happy with that. Even the bank is approaching me to take a loan but I don't want to. The money I make is enough. I am able to meet most of my needs as a person.

David's narrative underscores Kogan's (2000:210) view that professional identities are both individual and social. As such, as an individual David's professional identity derives from the perception that he (unlike his colleagues) is doing well financially. This shows that money (in the form of salaries) is an important contributor to idealised self-images among NUL academics; from the above narrative it is clear that they use it to satisfy their personal and social needs. This confirms Umur's (2011) statement that factors such as salary, benefits, job security, working conditions, working hours, the work itself, leadership and social relationships positively influence job satisfaction. It is not surprising then to hear Quincy talk of the satisfaction derived from salary review announcements from management:

Considering that I have not been here for long, I haven't witnessed much. I would say the satisfying moment was when we were in the meeting with the Vice Chancellor and he made an announcement of 5% increase in our salaries. That's good news. So it is always good news when you have more money. To me that was good.

Thus it seems that besides wanting remuneration to reflect academic trends some academics want their salaries to reflect their professional expectations. One issue that seems to contribute to dissatisfaction with salaries is explained by Marcel: *"The salaries have not been revised recently so that demotivates the members of the staff; the salary should... you know, match the inflation pressures that we are under"*. It therefore seems that keeping the salaries constant while the costs of life increase causes academics to view their jobs as low paying. This leads Rhea to say: *"Salaries here at NUL are demotivating for us as lecturers"*. Rhea's statement is consistent with Imran et al.'s (2014) study which found a positive correlation between rewards, recognition and job satisfaction of library employees in Lahore, Pakistan. It also confirms Saba and Iqbal's (2013) study which revealed that an appropriate salary was important for keeping academic staff motivated to perform highly in their work duties such as teaching, conducting research and conducting administrative duties. However, some academics were philosophical about the low salaries at NUL:

I would say in terms of pay or money aspect if you join the profession to be wealthy, then you're in the wrong place because there is no money in teaching or lecturing. We are not

rich people. So as much as we invest a lot in doing things that we do to impact the society in a positive way, we are really not recognised by the society now as influential (Quincy)

Quincy's narrative underlines the view that cultural values, personal experiences and self-reflection on own identity as some of the factors which influence the construction of professional identities (Slay & Smith, 2011). It also highlights Oshagbemi's (2000) contention that if an employee expects little and gets little, or expects a lot and gets a lot, he or she will be satisfied. In this case, it seems Quincy does not expect a lot and does not get it, hence he is satisfied with his job. Thus he emphasises non-financial recognition.

In summary, the subtheme 'recognition' showed that participants' professional identity was influenced by the 'recognition' that they received from their work, regardless of whether it was financial or non-financial. For some participants, meanings for their professional identities were derived from 'liking teaching', feeling appreciated', 'being financially secure', 'receiving salary increments' while other participants complained that they were dissatisfied with their salaries. Therefore, the simultaneous satisfaction and dissatisfaction with salaries among academics reflects their personal interests and professional identities in their work.

7.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, Burke's approach to IT showed that academic professional identities are not only reflexive and symbolic in nature but they are also realised through interaction between actors and others (Burke & Reitzes, 1981:84). Thus professional identities among academics at NUL are sets of meanings that they hold for themselves that define 'what it means' to be who they are as individuals, as role players (Burke's, 2004:5). Therefore Burke's (1991:837) view that identities as sets of meanings applied to the self as an actor in a social role or a situation which define what it means to be who one is has been confirmed.

The findings show that the alignment of individual expectations, professional values and working conditions determine the professional self-concepts of academics at NUL, confirming Kashefi's (2005:234) contention that different employees attach differing importance and value to their work. The findings also show that participants enjoy teaching, collaborations, being in control, successful, innovative, acknowledged, competitive and appreciated. In contrast, they complained about low salaries and the working environment which is not interactive, innovative, clean and conducive to learning. They also complained about marking many students, students' learning culture and attitudes which confirms Keeler and Semmer's (2013) statement that differences in the job satisfaction levels of workers are either caused by individual or situational factors.

Overall the findings draw attention to the view that professional academic identities are “co-constructions with an individual’s traits, beliefs and allegiances reflecting non-rational processes and commitments” (Taylor, 2008:29). That is, academic professional identities derive from academics’ entire thoughts, feelings, self-evaluations and imaginations of who they are; thus they are meanings that they hold about themselves, based on their observations, inferences, wishes, desires and how others act toward them (Stets & Burke, 2003:5). Consequently, it was evident in the findings that academic professional identities are embedded in IT’s conceptualisation of personal identity. They are key in the way academics assign meanings to themselves; hence they help academics claim purpose and meaning from their work (Slay & Smith, 2011:87).

The next chapter concentrates on how internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influences academic identity trajectories.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FINDINGS: 'DO I INTEND TO STAY?' REFLECTIONS ON THE CONTINUITY OF ACADEMIC IDENTITIES AT NUL

8.1 Introduction

Organisational commitment is defined as the strength of individual identity in favour of the organisation's manifest by mutual trust, understanding of the organisation's goals and values, and a strong desire to achieve organisational goals (Subejo, Troena, Thoyib & Aisjah, 2013:31). Accordingly organisational commitment may be interpreted in terms of 'loyalty' to the organisation (Gupta, 1982:99) and may be used to depict employee's involvement and identification with their organisation (Valentin, 2014:316). The three types of organisational commitment; affective, normative and continuance each depict emotional attachment to an organisation, obligation to remain in an organisation and the perceived cost of leaving an organisation (Valentin, 2014; Landy & Conte, 2010; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Since employees are expected to adjust to the conditions of the organisation and feel satisfied with the facilities and privileges provided to them (Gupta, 1982:100), it can be said that some academics stay at NUL because they want to, need to or feel that they ought to. With regard to examining the relationship between academic identity and organisational commitment, Cole and Bruch (2006:588) suggest that researchers should focus on the organisational identification process as 'the specific ways in which individuals define themselves in terms of their membership in a particular organisation'. For without it, there can be no commitment. These views highlight Petriglieri and Petriglieri's (2010 cited in Lamont & Nordberg, 2010:7) argument that identity work processes (both intra-psychic and social) are important since they help individuals create, protect and modify views of themselves which then helps them sustain a sense of personal agency, continuity and coherence.

It is for these reasons that Guzman-Valenzuela and Barnett (2013:1) opine that academic professions are trajectories; they are essentially an interplay between the institution as a structure (seeking to preserve and advance itself as an organisation) and academics as agents (seeking to fulfill their own self-realisation). This chapter therefore aims to find out *how do internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influence academic identity trajectories*. Here the aim is to show that commitment to NUL as a place of work depends on individual perceptions of job security, occupational prestige and well-being whilst an employee at NUL. Thus it will be shown that academics' attitudes towards NUL influence their reasons for and/or against working there.

8.2 Academic Identity as Journeys of Self-discovery

Academic identity should not be viewed as a fixed property; rather, it should be viewed as part of the lived complexity of a person's project and their ways of being in those sites which are constituted as being part of the academic (Clegg 2008:329). Therefore it is not an object; instead it is a constant becoming. Accordingly, as academics go through succession of forms of participation, their academic identities form trajectories within and across CoPs (Wenger, 1998:154). Archer (2008:385) concurs and adds that academics have to deal with the constantly shifting, evolving and changing HE field; therefore the meanings associated with what 'being' an academic entails are also in the process of change. However, since academic identities are forged within moral frameworks, in coming to know who academics are, questions arise about what is good or bad and what has importance to academics as individuals. Thus academic identity is tied up to what academics are committed to, what they value and what they strive for and these are continually changing (Fitzmaurice, 2013:614).

In the structural emphasis of IT, Stryker (1980) emphasises 'reflexive thinking' in relation to the roles that individuals have as this enables them to organise a definition of other's attitudes, orientations and future responses which are then (re)shaped and validated during interaction (Stryker, 1980:62). As such, Stryker argues that role identities generally contain a large set of meanings which individuals may use to describe what a particular role means to them. Therefore irrespective of the content of the chosen role identity, its meanings relate to the meanings implied by one's behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2009:115). Consequently, Stryker argues that identities are not situation specific; instead, they can be carried by people into the many situations that they experience, thereby affecting their conduct in those situations (Stryker, 2008:20).

From this perspective, discipline based communities at NUL are fields of possible trajectories; fields of possible pasts and possible futures (Wenger, 1998:156). However, since identity trajectories do not imply a fixed course or destination, it will be shown that they are a complementary view of academic identity as they portray academics as "situated within earlier experiences and intentions, future imagined careers, and just one aspect of a fuller life" (McAlpine, 2012:38). Therefore the key theme 'Academic Identity as Journeys of self-discovery' focuses on '*do I intend to remain in academia?*' It shows that NUL academics have differing levels of commitment to their work at NUL thus their narratives are expected to "provide a means to make sense of both the constancy of an individual's perception of identity combined with the perception of identity change through time" (McAlpine, 2012:38).

8.2.1 Altruism

Stryker (1980) views society as composed of enduring patterns of interactions and relationships that are different yet organised; thus individuals live their lives in small networks of social relationships by playing out roles that support their membership in these networks. The interactions and relationships that exist within these groups, organisations, communities and institutions are also influenced by the larger social structure within which the networks are embedded (Burke & Stets, 2009:45). Similarly, academics as professionals view their work as having connections to the larger social structure, thus they view it as having an additional objective of giving back to society (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008:262). The subtheme, 'altruism,' therefore underpins 'the personal' or embeddedness of academic identity trajectories within the broader social context (McAlpine, 2012:39).

Ties with social networks outside NUL were found to influence symbolic identification with NUL. It was also found that participants viewed their work as morally correct since it allowed them to experience some self-sacrifice for the benefit of others.: *"So my being here I wanted to empower myself academically, I wanted to impact the community through learning"* (Quincy). Robert added *"I want to give back to Lesotho for what it did for me"* and Hilda added: *"I stay in this country because of the love of the country; Ja... I think it's that"*. Thus participants view their work as good since it is important to them as individuals to impart their knowledge to improve the social situation of the country. However, the working conditions at NUL seem to create uncertainty about doing academic work:

I will stay at NUL because of the love I have for the country. I am doing an important job here I believe. Lesotho is behind so many countries on the development side and of course IT [Information technology] is the big issue of today and so for me I know that my expertise is needed in this country; and I know from my students and what they tell me that they enjoy what I teach them. In many ways one has to stay in their country... but sometimes it's hard to love something that abuses you (Robyn).

Robyn's narrative brings to light Kreiner and Ashforth's (2004:4) view that sometimes people attach complex meanings to modern organisations based on their values, goals and beliefs which often lead to simultaneous identification and dis-identification with one's organisation. Therefore it seems that Robyn has deeply ambivalent feelings for her job at NUL; she would like to stay to advance her field of study in Lesotho yet she is simultaneously aware that working at NUL exploits her. However, she chooses to stay because of favourable feedback that she has received regarding her teaching prowess and the sense of patriotism that she feels for Lesotho. Other participants shared similar sentiments:

I believe if I stay here I will make a change somehow, although I don't know how to put it. I would like to believe that NUL, as compared to other institutions, is at the same level or standards...I don't know. But I must say the professional environment in this institution makes me to want to serve my country through drama and the likes. I would definitely stay for that. In fact, I am staying for that already [Laughs] (René).

In fact I was offered a job where I did my PhD, just towards my submission I was given a course to teach, I taught in December... I don't remember well; but I did not want to teach there. Actually I am determined to stay here, I want to make the department work, I want to make the university work (Robert).

Similar to Robyn, René and Robert value giving back to the society at large. However, in René's case, she stays committed to her job at NUL due to its professional environment while Robert stays because he wants to see NUL growing and prospering as a university. This shows that Robyn, René and Robert identify with their work at NUL; as such, they intend to remain in their work since it helps them to maintain their connection with the organisation since its values or goals appeal to them (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). Other participants revealed that they chose to stay at NUL since their jobs allowed them to pass the ideals of their fields of study to the students:

The very fact is that the job is quite okay, I am teaching and I am seeing the results and to me that is enough to keep me going. I have seen the results. For instance, the call I just got now, she was saying 'hey, there are no people here'...they did not know we were going to make a public gathering...they thought that we were going to go house to house and I said 'okay go house to house then'; and they are satisfied and they are going. That's how motivated even our students are because some would say 'Uh-uh, us we want to come back'. But you see they don't say that, they are so motivated that they want to give out what they know (Edith)

Here it seems that Edith is aware that her job is significant in instilling community service ideals in her students. This love of interacting with students was also observed in Michael and Elizabeth's narratives; however in their case, the intention to remain at NUL derived from the perception that their work was intellectually stimulating:

I have never thought of resigning as such as for now. I love interaction with students, and also the fact that I like teaching, I am very passionate about my job. However if I have a situation where the ideal conditions are present, maybe I would be motivated to think of leaving, not because I don't like NUL, but because ...you know you always want a situation

where you have optimal external and internal motivation so that you can do the work at an optimal level... because you know it's a question of levels of performance. If you are in the situation where your levels of performance are reduced because of lack of extrinsic motivation, you have a situation where you can have maximal motivation... that is the best. So it's not because of NUL per say, but because of the principle. I walk by the principle not by the place (Michael).

I did consider joining another organisation and leaving academe but not in terms of the issues that are here. It was a pull effect not a push effect. Factors that would make me resign...if for any reason I would be requested or coerced to do something illegal. It doesn't take two minutes I leave. I mean when I say coerced... if I am asked to do something illegal I say 'no'. If it's 'you do it or else' then I leave. (Elizabeth).

From their narratives it seems that both Michael and Elizabeth not only identify with their work at NUL but they have also internalised it. That is, NUL's and their goals match to such an extent that it influences them to act accordingly (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). In Michael's case, the decision to remain at NUL seems to be normative in that he believes he should stay because he has not found a place that exceeds his principle of doing work that allows one to perform highly. Similarly, Elizabeth states that she would only resign if she found a job that outmatched her work at NUL. However, it seems that Elizabeth strongly believes that work should be moral, hence she remains at NUL because nobody has coerced her into performing acts that are immoral at work. Her narrative highlights Taylor (1989:27), academic identities are based on individuals' moral standpoints; that is their identities are defined by personal values. For that reason, values are the requisite link between identity and orientation; hence for individuals to know who they are, they need to be oriented in a moral space, where they can decide what is worth doing and what is not, as well as what has meaning or is trivial (Taylor, 1989:28).

In summary, the subtheme 'altruism' underpins 'the personal' element in academic identity trajectories (McAlpine, 2012:39) since it showed that academics as professionals view their work as having connections and additional objectives of giving back to society (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008:262). As such, participants decided to remain in their jobs at NUL because they believed this was morally correct and beneficial for others. They wanted to 'give back' to Lesotho and NUL, others wanted to pass the ideals of their fields of study to their students and society while others perceived their work as intellectually stimulating. Thus participants' academic identity trajectories were underpinned by 'the personal' or embedded nature of their academic identities (McAlpine, 2012:39).

8.2.2 Passion

For individuals, organisational identification provides a sense of identity and self-definition whereby they define themselves with the organisation as a social entity (Karanika-Murray, Duncan, Pontes & Griffiths, 2015:1020). Organisational identification therefore represents a desirable attachment that individuals feel for their employing organisation; as such, academics are said to identify with their HEI when they define themselves (at least partly) in terms of what they understand their HEI to represent. Thus, identification not only positively influences the work behaviour and commitment of workers but it also helps to foster in them a sense of meaning, belonging, and control at work (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:2).

In this case, the subtheme 'passion' for academe was found to typify participants' intentions to remain at NUL despite constraints. Therefore it could be said that participants who decided to remain at NUL had emotional ties to their work and NUL (affective commitment). They also saw their work as important since it encompassed work enjoyment or the pleasure derived from working itself (Aziz & Vitiello, 2015:171) as stated by Nelson: "*No, I don't want to quit academe because I do enjoy and love my job here at the university. I am passionate about lecturing*". Daniel also added: "*No, I never thought of it. I enjoy the job... I enjoy teaching. One other thing is the benefits we have here, there are a lot of benefits we derive from working here at NUL and the atmosphere again, that is important*". Other participants added:

I have never thought of resigning. No. I will not quit academe. I am very much passionate about academe so I would never consider resigning from academe. I think I have found a match for my personality even. I am never bored, never sad like some people that I often talk to here. They must think I am crazy. [Laughs]. But to be real, when I retire from here, then I just go home and be announced as still an academe. So I just love it. Yes. Especially when I am writing articles for publication in refereed journals and accredited journals (Alden).

But to me really no, because I have never thought of anything I can do besides teaching because I like interacting with students a lot, a lot, I don't know what to say. So I have never thought of doing anything else. Something that I have thought about is retirement age not quitting teaching. Serving my country is number one and knowing that I have good relationships with my students are very important to me (Diana).

The above narratives highlight the view that the stronger an individual's identification with their organisation, the more likely it is that they will act in accordance with the organisation's goals and expectations (Karanika-Murray, et al. 2015:1020). It also shows that individuals with affective

commitment are involved in and strongly identify with their membership in the organisation. Therefore they continue working at NUL because they want to (Paxson, 2003; Shore & Wayne, 1993). Thus it seems that participants have a passion for academe which influences them to commit and to be loyal to their work at NUL. Even so, elements of continuance commitment seem to be present on the narratives of both Alden and Diana, as they both seem to recognise the ‘benefits’ associated with continuing academic work. For example Alden said: *“when I retire from here, then I just go home and be announced as still an academe”*, while Diana said: *“Something that I have thought about is retirement age”*. Thus it seems they do consider the benefits versus the costs of doing academic work and these then influence their symbolic identification with NUL. In contrast, Hope revealed that she intended remaining a part of NUL since it was the epitome of academic practice in Lesotho: *“I have never thought of resigning, not when this is the highest institution in my profession (Hope)*. For other participants, commitment to NUL was influenced by the need to advance their academic careers:

I have been doing this job not too long now. So for now I find that I have an interest in pursuing an academic job. Maybe I will even register for PhD soon. It just depends. Actually in a meeting our Head (of department) did tell us that the university wants us to pursue our PhDs. There are even ways of doing so while I teach; that is worth considering especially with a new family on the way. So in that way you develop that new love...you keep discovering what you love about this job when you see your own journey increasing when you're here (David).

Ja... there are some factors that make me to stay. We are given the chances to further our studies assisted by the university. The university willingly assists members of the staff to further their studies or even to attend conferences which eventually will help one in teaching and learning. That keeps igniting the passion for staying as a teacher, I think (Marcel).

As indicated by David and Marcel, working at NUL is good because it feeds their need to grow and attain academic stature and rank and this seems to be important for David and Marcel. Even so, from their narratives it seems David has a normative commitment to his job. His statement *“the university wants us to pursue our PhDs... that is worth considering especially with a new family on the way”* shows that there family considerations play a role in the obligation David feels to remain at NUL. In contrast, it seems opportunities presented to staff to learn and develop academically is important in a job for Marcel, thus this influences him to feel an affective (emotional) attachment to his job at NUL since it *“keeps igniting the passion for staying as a teacher”*. Hence their reasons for remaining at NUL are rational; participants believe that their jobs are flexible and will allow them to become who they aspire to be in the future as stated by Rachel: *“No I don't intend to. The job is so flexible, I like that. Besides I*

am still new in academe, so I think I will not quit. The job is not so bad and students are not so bad".
Other participants added:

I don't intent to resign anytime soon. Okay, for one, we have freedom as lecturers. In this job you are free to do and plan your day as you see fit, to do other jobs on the side, no problem. I have really found this environment to be democratic. Eh... we have time of course... but of course sometimes we are under pressure (Teresa).

Recently I applied for promotion. Truly speaking I was meeting the requirements but they said I don't qualify due to the fact that I don't have six years to qualify for the promotion. I did want to leave because I could not understand why they cannot work on it or they must do something about it. Those are the things or reasons that would have influenced me to quit, but due to the love of teaching, it restricted or did not allow me to quit (Norris).

From their narratives it seems that Teresa and Norris identify with certain critical aspects of their jobs. For example, Teresa finds it flexible and the work environment democratic, thus she chooses to remain at NUL since she finds her job advantageous in terms of growing professionally. In contrast, Norris loves teaching and as a result he chooses to remain at NUL despite the fact that he is unhappy with the promotions policy at NUL. However, other participants seemed to remain loyal to NUL because they considered the costs of leaving against the rewards for staying at NUL (continuance commitment):

No I have never thought about resigning because I only have even less than a year at this university so I do not think of resigning. I am satisfied, I can manage to do other things, so there are no pressures. It would definitely be foolish to resign now I think (Marianne).

Here Marianne's narrative indicates that besides being new at NUL she is also satisfied with the flexible nature of her job; hence she perceives the decision to quit as 'foolish'. This highlights the view that "bonds between employees and organisations can range from emotional to merely an exchange for loyalty for pay and benefits" (Paxson, 2003: 526). Fields (2013:51) also adds that continuance commitment describes commitment to an occupation or profession, thus by substituting the profession's name in place of the organisation, Marianne considers any move to resign from NUL as 'foolish' since she is committed and satisfied by both her academic career and NUL as a workplace. A participant who also identified with her profession and work at NUL said:

No. I won't resign. Just give me time, and more tools for me to deliver quality work. Okay, there is another thing. I believe in the plans that I make, I create things that some people don't believe in; when I started the seminar people said it was a waste of money but when

I did it they saw the learning in it. So just trust me for the plans, just give me time and tools (Elizabeth).

Here it seems that Elizabeth identifies with her job as an academic because it allows her to exercise all her potential as an individual; she is able to plan and execute her plans according to her professional standards and finally see the results of her hard work. Besides this, Elizabeth's narrative highlights that she is a confident and innovative worker who does not rely on organisational support or lack thereof in order to follow through her plans. Thus when others realise her good idea, this reinforces her; (1) her academic identity, (2) the choice she made to stick to her plans and (3) commitment to her academic profession and NUL. Similarly, other participants were committed to their jobs at NUL because it allowed them to exercise their agency at work: *"I already told you that here you are your own boss, you are free. I can't go anywhere where I would have someone who commands... always instructing me to do this and to do that (Robert).* Another participant said:

Ja, it came across my mind sometime, but I immediately thought otherwise. In fact to tell you the truth, I have been getting offers and I decline them. Yes and other things I am not going to tell you... [Laughs]. First of all, one job I got was from a bank in town and the difference in salary between what I am earning here and what I was going to earn there was around three thousand. But you know what, I declined it. Is that too much, three thousand? Well to me I felt like it was not going to make a difference because when you look at... to start with, the type of attire... I will have to be wearing a shirt and a tie all the time, and I would have to be there every day from eight o'clock until five o'clock but here I arrive here at any time. I only make sure that I don't miss classes and students don't bounce [find me unavailable] all the time when they are coming for consultations. But you know at the bank I would have to be there by eight am until five pm. The setting there...you know the setting in the bank... we are so many in the hall. Everybody in his cubicle facing that way...you're all around. There I don't think I would be free. Maybe I could have considered it if the difference was above five thousand. To me three thousand was very little, because now I am a Mosotho man... I have animals at home, some subsistence farming projects where at some point I can make myself free to make sure that at home things are going well and at the bank I was not going to have that opportunity you know (Anderson).

Anderson's narrative reveals that he has continuance commitment to his work at NUL; that is the perceived benefits of staying at NUL seem to outweigh the costs of leaving. Therefore, he has been rejecting opportunities to resign from academic work at NUL from the realisation that finding comparable employment, which offers him the same job flexibility, is limited. Anderson also values the nature and privacy of academic work, thus he believes that he would have been unhappy working in an environment

that lacked these elements. Consequently, the work and its setting at NUL is a deciding factor for Anderson's professional and organisational commitment. Leslie shares similar thoughts:

Sometimes you may even want to say 'if I had any other job that would offer me the same package under the same circumstances, I would quit'. Only to find that wherever you have an offer that is close to what you are getting, you find that some kind of a job that is going to confine you to the office which is something I feel I can no longer afford to do. Well I think I would want to stay here for a number of reasons...in fact... I am staying here as I speak to you... I am here. I had an opportunity to leave sometime but I had to make some considerations. To be honest, I don't find myself working anywhere in the country other than NUL because...remember I told you I don't see myself working in an office environment. All the offers that have been coming my way are the offers that are going to confine me to the office...something that I simply cannot afford to do. Maybe I can, under very, very extreme circumstances and this implies that my only possibility would be to go to er... South Africa (Leslie).

Similar to Anderson it seems that Leslie is also against working in settings where he would be 'confined' to the office. As a result he has also chosen to forgo some lucrative employment opportunities because they were incomparable to the work setting at NUL. Thus it can be said that the cost of moving to a new job and earning more money is balanced by the sense of contentment and flexibility that working at NUL gives Leslie. In this case it could be said that Leslie's statement "*I don't find myself working anywhere in the country other than NUL*" shows that his continuance commitment is strong. Whereas at first he seemed to stay due to the perceived costs of leaving, he now stays because of '*some considerations*' he made. The findings also revealed that some participants aimed to remain at NUL till retirement because they recognised that they had accumulated investments that would be lost if they resigned from the organisation (Paxson, 2003:526; Shore & Wayne, 1993:774). This sentiment was echoed by Amos:

Teaching is all I like. I like them [my students] to be occupying offices in Maseru...and at the moment the Minister of Education is my former student at high school and I have other ministers that I taught here; that makes my motivation even more. As I told you that I am aging, I am in the 60 plus. I don't want to get a new job at this age because at the age of 65, I have to quit and go for retirement. I have worked for the university so I want the benefits.

Here it seems that Amos identifies with his job at NUL to such an extent that he defines himself by the same attributes that he believes define NUL. To illustrate, NUL's Mission is to promote Lesotho's

development through innovative teaching, learning, research and professional services leading to the production of high calibre and responsible graduates who will diligently serve their society (National University of Lesotho, 2015: 4). Similarly, Amos seems to enjoy producing students who end up occupying positions of power and influence in society. This then makes him realise that his job and NUL's *raison d'être* are similar which enhances his commitment to NUL. However, this steadfast commitment to his job seems to emanate from the realisation that he is now advanced in age and is no longer competitive. Similarly, Alex is committed to his job despite its challenges because he believes it is impractical at his age and academic rank to resign:

Ja, basically actually I like my job, apart from you know...circumstances. I think that sometimes that is common to everyone. That's the general... university wide, you know. But otherwise I am ok with my lecturing and my research. Not to say there are no limitations. As for resigning I am not going to do that. At my age it doesn't make sense. Well the university still needs some professors and I am sure they would not be amused if I was to retire. They job is not ok sometimes... but sometimes it's fine really.

In conclusion, it seems that the subtheme 'passion for academe' underpins individual agency in academic identity trajectories (McAlpine, 2012:39). The study revealed that participants decided to remain at NUL due to the emotional ties, to advance their academic careers, to become who they aspired to be in the future, the favourable work settings while others intended to remain since they were close to retirement. These findings confirm the view that individuals with continuance commitment recognise that they have accumulated investments that would be lost if they resigned from the organisation (Paxson, 2003:526; Shore & Wayne, 1993:774).

8.2.3 Options

Stryker (in Carter & Fuller, 2015:5) contends that socialisation is critical in identity formation as it not only helps people learn normative behaviour, but it relates to role relationships. As Stets (2006:89) states, "to see the overall self, we must envision it as encompassing many different parts or identities, each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure". The argument here is that irrespective of the content of the chosen role identity, its meanings relate to the meanings implied by one's behaviour (Burke & Stets, 2009:115). However, Stryker (2008:20) states that social behaviour is nothing more than taking "role choice" or deciding to meet expectations of one role rather than the other, so he emphasises the social structural sources of identity and the relations among identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000:10). The findings of the study are that the subtheme 'options' underpins opportunities in academic identity trajectories or what is understood or known to be available career opportunities at any point in

time (McAlpine, 2012:39). In this subtheme participants consider resigning from NUL because they wish to explore other career opportunities as indicated by Leslie:

At that time I considered it. I had an offer somewhere in South Africa immediately after I had finished my Masters. But I had to consider a number of issues like I have some other life outside er... job life. I have social life, and I have some interests. So I would want to stay here so that I am closer to my family, I am closer to my business interests...things that I am doing outside the academic area. So that is exactly what would make me want to stay at NUL. But if I were to get something that is very similar in Maseru, then I think I would consider it. But in the absence of that I think I want to stay at NUL (Leslie).

Here Leslie's narrative shows that he gave up a possible job opportunity due to his commitments to his family and social life in Lesotho. Leslie's narrative is a classic example of continuance commitment where he chooses to stay at NUL because he needs a job which confirms Fields' (2013:51) view that continuance commitment is associated with the costs that employees perceive are related to leaving the organisation. The findings are also that even though participants were still employed, they would opt to resign if better job opportunities came up:

[Laughs]. I thought about if there are other green pastures elsewhere. I have also thought about them; it is important that one could think of it. If something comes up somewhere, Ja... you can grab it. Naturally and one would think along those lines. Given what... maybe for example, what the private sector offers. Naturally we tend to compare what is out there and that thing itself says that one can be tempted to join other institutions, if they are ready to provide something better (Marcel).

You know I really like teaching...we have freedom, time. But that doesn't mean I intent to grow old and die here. Not at all. One day I will resign to explore the corporate world and take the business venture. You should not stay at the same place. At least you should have experience of many things before we die (Teresa).

Here Marcel and Teresa's narratives resonate the view that academic identity arises in ongoing dialectic of 'structure' and 'agency'; thus their identity trajectories may be most reasonably described as an 'improvisation' created through identity work processes which more often than not are calculative, pragmatic, emotionally charged and social (Kreiner et al. 2006:1033). Therefore, even though they are still at NUL, if an opportunity and a better offer came along, then they would consider resigning. In Marcel's case, he keeps his options open for any 'greener pastures' offers that may come and are better than his job at NUL while Teresa is not actively seeking employment but envisions doing so in

the future. Similar sentiments were shared by other research participants. However in their case, the intention to resign seemed to be influenced by the need to earn a better salary and improve their social status:

Yes. I can resign...it's the salary, because of the salary issues actually... because if you talk with your pay slip in other academic setups you would be embarrassed to do so. Ja... but that thought I have had before that if I get an institution that pays better I will be very much satisfied. If we say academe pays low, as in the Lesotho context... that really can affect that because if I can get something up there that is more than this I will accept the offer. Mmm... at my level of education I think there are many people in other universities of my level, but I think I could compete favourably with other people. If I could be at least a PhD holder because at Master's level there are a lot of people, so I'm sure the competition would be high there (Hilda).

As shown in her narrative, Hilda regards her remuneration as a source of embarrassment when compared to other academic settings. First of all, this suggests that she has been in contact and interaction with other academics and she has compared what they earn versus what she earns and from this she has developed a dissatisfaction with her job. Hence she states that if she could 'get something up there' she would resign. However, it seems that the perception that academics of her rank are numerous influences her decision to follow other career opportunities. In contrast, other participants indicated that they intended resigning from academic work at NUL due to its lack of incentives. As a result academics were left feeling like they were blue service workers and not professionals:

Continue working at NUL? Maybe... but it's not likely. There are different things that influence me to resign; first of all, there is no motivation for work... maybe you provide or pay lecturers satisfactory salaries. That is the form of motivation, knowing that after the year I can do something... but if salaries are low that is demotivation. It means I am just working but I am stranded out there, I just work to survive, no accumulation. And also the issue of the way we are teaching, we are teaching so many students and using the traditional method of teaching but if we use the modern method of teaching that will make our work easier for us to perform well. Also I wanted to quit NUL maybe to go and work... not in academic... whether in projects where I use my practical knowledge. Here we are doing much of theory, no practical so I wanted the practical part of it. But so far teaching is fine... is where people relax and they can do other activities like consultancies... but when it comes to marking you won't say that we have rested (Maxwell).

From his narrative, Maxwell seems to be generally demotivated by two aspects related to the working conditions at NUL; low salaries and the use of obsolete teaching methods. As such, he has begun envisioning himself as working in a non-academic field. However, it seems that Maxwell is also unhappy about his work at NUL because he believes that it lacks certain aspects such as the practical/application component of his profession that are important to him. Hence he is considering resigning. Similarly, Holly and René intends to resign due to the perception that her work behaviour is lowered:

Yes, I have thought about resigning from NUL at times. If your performance is not up to scratch...why stay because you're going to be frustrated? So maybe your supervisor asks, 'how far have you gone?' each and every day. You will end up quitting. If your performance is not good, you want to do something whereby you will be able to perform. So if I am not performing well in academe, I will consider something, maybe consultancy or whatever (Holly).

Yes. Sometimes it just happens, especially when I am unhappy about something. Like the time when we have to use classes to hold performances because SRC is holding a meeting with students. I just felt like why can't they hold it in a classroom so that we go to the hall? So sometimes I feel that if I have something better I will leave. Given a chance to go somewhere better yes I will leave. Maybe the environment we are living in, there should be a vibe at the institution, something that has that 'wow' factor (René).

Here it seems that Holly and René's academic identity trajectories derive from the need to do work which would enable them to perform optimally. In Holly's case, the intention to resign is influenced by her moral frameworks as an academic; thus any self-perception that she is underperforming has the effect of lessening the enthusiasm for her work. In contrast, René is unhappy about the way she does her work where she thinks she does not have the power to determine her work; hence she would gladly swap NUL for a workplace that offers her a 'wow factor'.

In summary the subtheme 'options' has shown that academic identity trajectories are influenced by personal needs to explore other career opportunities which highlight McAlpine's (2012:39) view that opportunities or what is understood or known to be available career opportunities at any point in time influence academic identity trajectories. They are also influenced by the need to acquire better job opportunities with better salaries, thereby improving participants' social and professional status. This confirms Stryker's (in Stets, 2006:89) view that the overall self encompasses different identities, each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure. As such, by choosing other jobs perceived as 'better'

comparatively, participants choose to take advantage of available career options and meet expectations of one role rather than the other (Stryker, 2008:20).

8.2.4 Disillusions

Identity is said to be nourished by memories of significant past experiences; therefore it is through the construction of a life story that self and memory are intertwined. If narratives form a critical link between memory and self, it then becomes important to focus on the role of social interaction and individual differences in understanding oneself. Therefore the way in which individuals share their memories through narratives modifies how they think of past experiences and themselves; therefore it becomes necessary to examine how past cultural constructs of the self come to shape the interaction that people engage in presently as well as the selves that are formed (Fivush & Haden, 2003:vii-viii). This is exemplified in narrative by Maxwell:

You know this thing can drive someone mad sometimes. Continue working at NUL? Maybe... I think people should have manageable classes. Now I am teaching 200 something students at 3rd year and that is too much I can't cope marking those assignments within a short period of time. Actually I am not interested in salaries but if people can earn something that they can do other things not just work and in the end of the day you had accumulated nothing. You have just worked here for 30 or 40 years and at the end of that time I don't have anything.

Maxwell's narrative shows that heavy workloads are part of the disillusionments that NUL academics encounter in their daily work which affect their intention to remain in academia. Another issue for him seems to emanate from low salaries which he believes do not motivate academics to stay committed to their jobs at NUL. This findings highlight McAlpine's (2012:39) view that the past and its experiences influence present intentions and imagined futures. Similarly, the findings revealed that some participants considered resigning from their work at NUL due to 'disillusions' that they had experienced since doing academic work:

The other time I think I was marking and I had to meet the deadline set by the external examiner and ...I had an examination that was written I think about 2 days before the deadline that was given by the external examiner. My exam was one of those that was written very last and I had to mark and I felt I was just overworked and I just felt like...that day I just felt like 'oh why don't I just leave this thing here and go and look for work somewhere else' (Leslie).

The issue of the working conditions that we as lecturers here are working under is a real issue for some of us. I mean look at my office, it looks like ruins! I have asked for another office, but nobody cares. Even a response to my demands is not there. It's like someone just looks at my letter and says 'who is this one?' I hate that. And when salaries are stagnant, there are no increases; that is really something that can make one to go and look for another job if possible because he does not feel like he is in a job that is paying well and making one to be proud of working there. Well this for me is the issue really. This thing of salaries is painful for us as lecturers. Even the professors are complaining. What more for us mere lecturers? (Robyn).

Leslie and Robyn's narrative resonates the findings of Bigirimana's (2016) study among academics at Africa University in Zimbabwe which revealed that the work motivation for academic staff was generally downplayed by factors such as uncompetitive salaries, non-collegiality decision-making, opportunity in career development and academic freedom. From this narrative one thing seems clear about Robyn's identity trajectory as an academic, she has experienced some negative work experiences in the past. Therefore she is unhappy about the remuneration, working conditions and the general treatment that academics are given at NUL. These perceptions seem to have altered how she feels about her work as an academic and, by extension, her academic identity; hence she is considering resigning from academia. This finding confirms Khalid et al.'s (2012) finding that when lecturers are not satisfied with their working conditions, they prefer to change institutions or leave the profession at once. Carl also shared similar sentiments with Robyn. However, in his case, he intended resigning from academe because he was disillusioned by the demanding nature of academic work:

Now I'm not so sure if this is the right job for me...this is why I have been saying to people maybe I should go back to my old job in administration, only because I haven't had time to rest since I came here... and at the same time I don't think I like the job since I am always in this office working from eight to five. I don't even get much chance to walk around and rejuvenate my mind. You know...I keep telling people that I am not even thinking of registering for PhD because I am not too sure if I am going to be staying in this job for some time. This is why I said I try at all cost to do my job well. So every time, every time, every time, it's about doing my job well. Whether I like it or I don't like it or what... it's all about doing my job well. So that if comes tomorrow and I have to leave this university, I would have left some footprints to say 'truthfully that fellow did his job'. Another issue is salary. I know that in South Africa with my qualifications, I would be in the big leagues. If the door can open now and then someone says 'come and be the CEO here'... I am going as in now (Carl).

Carl's narrative three issues are clearly affecting his identity trajectory: firstly, he is physically and mentally exhausted by the demands of his work and he is considering going back to his old position that (in his perception) was less demanding. Secondly, it seems that the current nature of academic work has had such a deep negative impact on Carl that he does not intend to pursue an academic career and attain a PhD. Lastly, it seems that Carl is unhappy about the salary and the status of the position that he holds in academe and what he is earning in academia because he believes that his professional counterparts are '*in the big leagues*' doing much better than he is financially and professionally.

However, it seems that Carl's own personal values and moral frameworks keep him doing his work well despite that he currently disidentifies with his work as an academic. This work ethic was also observed in Rhea's narrative: "*I can quit even today but as a professional I won't love to leave in the middle of the semester. If I decide to go I will leave at the end of the semester... I will not leave in the middle of the semester*". Here it seems Rhea (similar to Carl) knows that she intends to resign if an opportunity to do so presents itself; however, she would wait to ensure that she completed her assigned duties. This confirms Kreiner and Ashforth's (2004:3) view that disidentification with the organisation is undesirable as it not only leads to high turnover and tension felt between the member and the organisation, but it may lead to employees who despite dissatisfaction continue working at the organisation not because they love doing so, but because they cannot afford to leave or they feel an obligation to stay with the organisation. A similar situation was observed in Rhea and John's narratives:

Yes, in fact I am applying for a job everywhere because I want to take my children to better schools, but with this salary you cannot take your children to where I want to. So I will leave because I want a better education for my children (Rhea).

If I could I would do it now... because of ...It's so many issues that make me wish to resign. But for some of us the issue is with lack of collaboration between academics due to discrimination and of course the low salaries here. Those are so disturbing for me. Another big problem here is that I teach too many students, I don't know what can be done about that, but the numbers are too high (John).

The above narratives emphasise Metcalf et al.'s (2005:xvii) study which found that dissatisfaction with the work itself, relations with the manager, being able to use one's own initiative, hours, relations with colleagues and physical work conditions affected the likelihood of academics leaving the HE sector. The narratives also represent an 'active' separation of an individual from the organisation. Thus, it seems that Rhea and John describe themselves as not having the same attributes or principles that define NUL (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004:2-3). For example, unlike Carl, Rhea's intention to quit academe

seems to be influenced by familial obligations where she feels that her job at NUL does not allow her to provide for her children as she would wish. In contrast, John seems to be disillusioned by low salaries, large teaching volumes and the general lack of collaboration between him and his colleagues at NUL. This confirms Kreiner and Ashforth's (2004:3) view that dis-identification entails an organisational member's repulsion of the organisation's mission, culture or centrally defining aspects to the point that he or she consciously or actively separates his or her identity and reputation from those of the organisation.

In conclusion, the findings of the subtheme 'disillusions' highlight McAlpine's (2012:39) view that past experiences underpin academic identity trajectories and influence present intentions and imagined futures. The findings also show that past experiences at work and its setting have the power to dishearten and disillusion the participants; they have lost their once idealised view of academia as a prestigious, well-paying and autonomous, with lowered job demands, collaborative and generally satisfying profession. Consequently, participants intend to resign from their work at NUL as soon as they can due to the letdown that they experience at work which confirms Fivush and Haden's (2003:vii) statement that identities are nourished by memories of significant past experiences.

8.2.5 Relations

For Stryker (1980) identity salience is the result of identity commitment, which implies that individuals are more likely to define situations that they enter in ways which will make their most significant identity relevant, thus enabling them to enact that identity (Burke & Stets, 2000:12). This aspect of identity salience or commitment reflects the density of ties or the social structure in which an identity is embedded (Burke & Stets, 2000:12). Similarly, the findings of the study are that the subtheme 'relations,' represents the possible horizons for possible action that underpins academic identity trajectories (McAlpine, 2012:39). The findings revealed that participants had encountered situations of conflict and uncertainty at work and had considered resigning, as stated by Norris: *"Yes I have thought about it. It was due to the uncertainty; there was a time whereby in the leadership of the former vice-chancellor the staff members were released from their posts"*. Yet they had decided to steadfastly remain loyal and committed to their jobs as academics:

"There was that time you remember...some conflict between staff and management? They were saying they were going to cut down on the number of staff members of other departments? It was at that time when I considered resigning. But I want to stay unless something pushes me" (Robert).

Other participants added:

Uh-uh! I have never thought of resigning even if times were hard during the previous administration of that lady vice chancellor. I said 'she will kick me out'. I did not want to have early retirement. Teaching is my life ...I don't think of going to better jobs in the government (Amos).

Also a few years ago there were some problems at NUL. At that time when there was restructuring, the former vice chancellor tried to force and restructure the university. It was bad at that time. She was trying to close down departments and merge things. It was a lot that she tried to do that meant people would most likely lose their jobs but it never happened. I remember there was so much confusion. At that time I almost quit (Robyn).

Yes, under the former VC's leadership I had that in mind, but now I am okay. It was the uncertainty about job security and there were some things that were happening at that time... there were a lot of things that were done by the management which took focus away from our job. What that management wanted to do to us...you remember there were a lot of strikes and demonstrations that were going on and that was not okay with us as lecturers. But now I intend to stay here; because with the present management we are able to conduct research and the fact that I enjoy interacting with students (Nelson).

From the above narratives, it is clear that participants once entertained the idea of resigning from their work and it seems that these perceptions were influenced to a large extent by the type of relations and work environment at NUL. For example, Robyn states that the former management tried to 'force' some fundamental changes in the way in which the university was run. These caused a lot of misunderstandings and dissatisfaction among academic staff. Similarly, Nelson compares the past and current job environment and management; from this comparison he feels like now the work environment at NUL is more compatible to how he views himself as an individual. Therefore the intention to quit is no longer an issue for him. Similar sentiments were shared by Leslie:

During the unrests...the university management...workers unrests I thought that I needed to get a job somewhere else because of the uncertainty. You know, you couldn't do anything, not to plan your life. No one knew what was going to happen the following day or week. So that uncertainty was really affecting me particularly because I was supposed to have left for my PhD studies. Then I came back and when I came back I thought I was going to be here for some two years so as to be able to be allowed to go back. All of a sudden there are these unrests; you are not sure if you will still have an opportunity to go back. You

are told that all those study leaves have been suspended and it was like 'whoa, I have to choose now between my personal goal and my current job?' And I thought 'why can't I resign?' Until somebody came to me and said we think this is going to...the situation will come to normal in a few months (Leslie).

Leslie's narrative indicates that a stressful work environment not only took his ability to be in control of his work and life but it also left him unsure of his future endeavours. Leslie's narrative also indicates that during the unrests at NUL, communication channels between management and staff deteriorated to such an extent that they were just informed of managements' decisions. This situation left them feeling like they were not part of decision-making efforts during times of crises. It also left them feeling dissatisfied with the work relations as indicated by Edith:

Well, with the former leadership I could see myself getting demotivated because there was a lot of dissatisfaction all round. All around people were not happy. We were just complaining about one thing or another, because she [the former VC] was just bringing down a lot of things. For instance she wanted... there are some departments that she wanted to merge ... so people were just not happy. If it carried on like that there would be a lot of demotivation and probably I would not be sitting here. But now... I don't consider resigning for now. But when my time of retirement comes I will just retire (Edith).

The above narrative draws attention to the demotivating effect of the tension in work relations on academics. It seems that both Nelson and Edith were unhappy with the previous management of NUL since they disrupted the normal flow of the relations among the academics. They also disrupted their work. The previous management also created a work environment that was unconducive for the work of academics as professionals. However, since the situation had normalised, Edith indicates that she now intends to remain in academia until retirement. However, it is interesting to note that even though some academics had negative experiences in their work in the past and had resigned, they had renegotiated their academic identities and decided to remain at NUL as in the case of Hillary. When I asked her if she intended resigning from her job at NUL she said: "*I did. Actually I did resign, but that was a long time ago*".

Interviewer: Why did you resign?

Hillary: *Well, I resigned from another faculty before because I was unhappy with my old professors, they were not fair, and I did not like that kind of thing. I will give you an example, at that time we had many adult teachers coming back to join a pre-diploma programme that prepared them to do the diploma programme and a*

degree, subsequently. However, there were instances where people in the pre-diploma programme would upon graduation in that programme be admitted into the degree programme without the diploma programme and I questioned that. I said, 'we, the young academics, are the ones who teach these people, we know their abilities, we know what they deserve, they are ready for the diploma programme, not for the degree programme'. The meeting decided that junior staff could not make decisions in the department. So I said 'I quit right away, if I can do the work but I cannot say whether these students are ready for this or that, and if people who have nothing to do with these students in the classroom are the ones who know better, I had better go and enable them to do it themselves'. That's why now I left that faculty to join IEMS¹⁵.

Interviewer: Mm... so how do you feel about teaching past your retirement? Would you consider working at NUL if you are given an extension on your contract?

Hillary: *I still have a lot to give back to NUL. I had the opportunity to supervise Masters' degrees and PhDs. I learned a lot from that, that's why now I can help people who are studying here and guide them with their theses... I have that experience. Yes. Without any doubt because I am happy at NUL. I am happy but at the same time I feel I should now get ready to go, leave other people to do it. My grandchildren also need me and I need them".*

Interviewer: Would you resign from NUL now?

Hillary: *No I would not resign. In fact I hope they keep me a little longer here. The thing is I like everything about my work; it's my little secret passion, pleasure...joy. I enjoy doing research; this is my second nature now. I want to feel that I am publishing. Every year I should have at least one publication. I like it, I like mentoring young academics and they come in larger numbers now. I think they tell each other about me and they come and I enjoy that. Yes. Now I am imparting knowledge to the young academics more than it was the case before. I think, as you can tell, that young academics at NUL are interested in research and getting PhDs so this is nice, this is interesting and rewarding.*

¹⁵ NUL also houses three institutes; the Institute of Education (IE) which undertakes research in education and offers in-service training for practicing teachers, the Institute of Extramural Studies (IEMS), which offers part-time diploma and degree programmes in adult education, business studies and mass communication, and Institute of Southern African Studies (ISAS), which is a research centre for the University (CHE, 2010).

Hillary's narrative highlights the view that academic identities are premised on beliefs, norms and values like discipline scholarship, intellectual curiosity, shared practice, accountability to peers, professional autonomy, self-regulation of own work behaviour and academic professionalism (Winter, 2009:123). It also shows that she enjoys and excels in other academic roles besides teaching and this reinforces and supports her identity as an academic. Therefore, Hillary's value of gaining and imparting knowledge not only helps her to experience consistency in her work but also allows for a smooth role performance. As such, her academic identity trajectory is a consequence of valuing scholarship and transmission of the academic culture (Kuh & Whitt, 1986:76 cited in Clarke et al. 2013:7). Thus she judges her actions (mentoring, researching and teaching) as appropriate since they offer her a degree of correspondence between her identity as an academic and the identity implied by such actions within the NUL cultural framework.

The common meaning that she received from her past experiences (teaching, researching and mentoring) also reinforces her actions in them, thereby solidifying her identity as an academic (Sojonky, 2010:136). Her actions as an academic also satisfy two needs for Hillary; they make her work comprehensible and significant (Kennett & Lomas, 2015:3). Hence, mentoring for Hillary is not just a strategy for gaining popularity among young academics; instead, it helps her meet very specific needs which enhance meaning in her work. This confirms Trede et al.'s (2012:374-375) observation that academics develop their identities from caring about others negotiated in shared meaning-making constructions within CoP. They also arise from personal epistemologies and shared understandings of relationships, place, mind and practice as well as professional knowledge and expertise.

8.3 Chapter summary

In this chapter, Stryker's (2000:24) structural approach IT showed that academic identities are situation specific. Hence people have many different selves which correspond to the different positions that they hold in groups (Stets, 2007:89). Therefore, whether or not academics remain committed to their identities relies on 'reflexive thinking' in relation to the roles that an individual occupies as this enables individuals to organise orientations and future responses which are then (re)shaped and validated during interactions (Stryker, 1980:62). It also involves taking "role choice" or deciding to meet expectations of one role rather than another, so he emphasises the social structural sources of identity and the relations among identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000:10). As such, Stryker showed that academic identities have large sets of meanings which individuals use to describe what a particular role means to them (Burke & Stets, 2009:115).

Overall, this chapter showed that academic identities are not only fluid, malleable and dynamic and likely to change over time as academics position themselves (Leibowitz et al., 2014:1266) but they are also continuously 'under construction' in contexts that are characterised by uncertainty and complexity (Taylor, 2008:29). As such, academic identities have "coherence through time that connects the past, present and the future" (Wenger, 1998:154). The findings showed that altruism, passion, options, disillusion and relations influenced whether academics intended remaining at NUL or not. This stresses Badley's (2016) view that academics, their identities and communities are '*narratives in progress*', subject to further re-description and re-composition. Therefore, as academics go through a succession of forms of participation, their identities form social and temporal identity trajectories within and across CoP. Thus their community, its history and forces that drive its evolution, shape the trajectories that individuals construct (Wenger, 1998:156).

Consequently, it is clear from the findings that identification and loyalty to NUL influence participants' academic identity trajectories; their narratives depict the overall strength of their emotional attachment, identification and involvement within NUL (Cole & Bruch, 2006:588; Paxson, 2003:526). It also shows that the bonds that participants have with NUL range from emotional, to merely an exchange of loyalty for pay and benefits. It further shows that academics have different types of organisational commitments (Paxson, 2003:526).

The next chapter presents the study conclusion.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

This thesis set out to describe and interpret the narratives of the construction of academic identities at NUL. The overarching question for this study was: 'How do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL'? Specifically, it addressed the following questions; 1) 'How do reflexive interpretations of cultural expectations tied to membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff?' 2) 'How do descriptions of the (mis)alignment between job facets, individual values and expectations influence meaningfulness and fulfillment for academics' professional self-concepts?' 3) 'How do internalised meanings of involvement and symbolic identification with NUL influence academic identity trajectories'? As proposed in the research questions, the aim of this thesis was not only to bring awareness to the neglected issue of academic identities in Lesotho, but it was also to advance academics' narratives on the lived experiences of being an academic in the Lesotho HE sector.

9.2 The construction of academic identities at NUL: The summary of findings

This study provides the practice of letting individuals tell stories about themselves so that 'who' they are emerges. Accordingly, SIT and IT were chosen as theoretical departure points for this study as they explain in detail how individuals construct identities. On the one hand, SIT states that individuals construct identities from events and encounters between themselves and other actors at a given time (Owens et al. 2010:485); thus identities are interpretations of the work situation (MacKinnon, 1994:62). On the other hand, IT argues that individuals craft their identities from: (1) the '*structure*' or networks of relationships in which they occupy positions and play roles (Stryker & Burke, 2000:5). (2) '*Interaction*' or the distinctive idiosyncratic interpretations that they bring to their roles (Burke & States, 2009:39; Stets, 2006:89) and from (3) '*cognition*' or reflexive symbolic interaction between themselves and others (Burke & Reitzes, 1981:84).

The theoretical underpinnings of the study, combined with the emergent consensus in sociology that identity refers to meanings that individuals attach reflexively to themselves (Brown, 2014:23), show that academic identities at NUL are the result of the work situation and relationships which academics participate in.

Table 1 below presents the key themes and subthemes of the study. It shows that the key theme *Lived Work Experiences* has seven subthemes; *Normative Community Membership* had six and *Job Attitudes* seven, while *Journeys of Self-Discovery* had five subthemes. These are briefly summarised below.

Table 1: Key themes and subthemes

| CATEGORY (SELECTIVE CODING) | THEMES (AXIAL CODING) | SUBTHEME (OPEN CODING) |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Academic Identity as Lived Work Experiences | Enjoyment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Passion for teaching/job;</i> ▪ <i>Teaching is in my blood;</i> ▪ <i>I enjoy/love/like teaching;</i> ▪ <i>Teaching is my/a calling.</i> |
| | Applicability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Qualifications are relevant to job/teaching.</i> ▪ <i>Teaching courses across faculties.</i> ▪ <i>Experienced performer/ motivation towards career/job.</i> ▪ <i>Connection between job and practice.</i> |
| | Exploitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Earning peanuts.</i> ▪ <i>Job is a form of modern slavery.</i> |
| | Facilitation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Lecturing.</i> ▪ <i>Teaching.</i> ▪ <i>Instructing.</i> |
| | Multitasking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Teaching/Researching/Publishing</i> ▪ <i>Coordinator.</i> ▪ <i>Consultant.</i> ▪ <i>Committee member</i> ▪ <i>Community service provider/worker.</i> |
| | Prestige | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Lecturing is a respected career</i> ▪ <i>Influence/Departmental headship.</i> ▪ <i>I have an important job.</i> |
| | Burn-out | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Job/teaching is too much for me.</i> ▪ <i>I am teaching big/popular classes.</i> ▪ <i>Class size is physically exhausting.</i> |
| Academic Identity as Normative Community Membership | Managing time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Plan/make/sacrifice time for work.</i> ▪ <i>Time management.</i> ▪ <i>Starting early</i> |
| | Working overtime | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Work is all I do.</i> ▪ <i>To ensure quality.</i> ▪ <i>I mark after-hours/at night/at home/weekends/any spare moment.</i> |
| | Self-motivation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>I motivate/push myself</i> ▪ <i>I set myself straight</i> ▪ <i>I am committed.</i> ▪ <i>I love my work.</i> |
| | Underperforming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>My work is emotionally draining.</i> ▪ <i>There are no work incentives.</i> ▪ <i>Low morale</i> |
| | Balancing roles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Inability to balance multiple roles</i> ▪ <i>I am overloaded with large classes.</i> ▪ <i>Balancing being a researcher/teacher/community worker/administrator.</i> ▪ <i>Understaffed departments</i> |
| | Work assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Large teaching/marking/supervision loads.</i> ▪ <i>University must employ more teachers/lecturers/tutors/teaching and marking assistants.</i> |

| CATEGORY (SELECTIVE CODING) | THEMES (AXIAL CODING) | SUBTHEME (OPEN CODING) |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| Academic Identity as Job Attitudes | Autonomy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I allow students to use ICTs in my class. I bring own equipment to teach. I have power/control over my work. My job gives me freedom/ability to determine own career progression. |
| | Accomplishments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pride in finishing work despite challenges. Coming up with new things. Students are proud of me. I am proud of students' successes. |
| | Learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work keeps me on my toes. Chance to further studies. There is a possibility for development Improve my learning. I managed to come up with a number of articles. |
| | Interdependencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interacting with other people. Collaborating with colleagues. Spend time with professors and doctors. People here are willing to work. |
| | Work environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happy to see new buildings. Clean/dusty environment. We use old teaching styles which are time wasting. Teaching facilities are not good at all. I have to borrow teaching aids. The university is under resourced. |
| | Students' behaviour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students do not have an invested interest in their work. Students do not reflect that you teach. Students not coming to class. Student's plagiarism. Students' behaviour during strikes. |
| | Recognition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The outside world appreciates us. I feel appreciated here. Things are really going well for me here. We are not recognised as influential. |
| Academic Identity as Journeys of Self-discovery | Altruism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I wanted to impact the community. I will stay at NUL because I love my country. I want to make NUL work. |
| | Passion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am passionate about academe. I never thought of anything I can do besides teaching. You keep discovering what you love about this job. I like my job/it would be foolish to resign. Freedom/flexibility at work. Teaching is my life. |
| | Options | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was an opportunity for a more promising job. I thought about green pastures. I do not intend to grow old and die here at NUL. If I get an institution that pays better than NUL I will be satisfied. There is no motivation for work at NUL. |
| | Disillusions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My office looks like ruins. Teaching is not right for me. I am applying for a job everywhere. If I could I would do it now. |
| | Relations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Times were hard under the leadership of former vice-chancellor There was uncertainty with leadership of former vice chancellor. Former vice chancellor tried to force change in the university. Colleagues did not take my contributions seriously. |

9.2.1 Academic Identity as Lived Work Experiences

The thematic analysis of the data reveals the patterns associated with the research question; that is, the construction of academic identities is found to relate to academics' narratives of experiencing 'enjoyment', 'applicability', 'exploitation', 'facilitation', 'multitasking', 'prestige' and 'burn-out' at work. Therefore the key theme '*Academic Identity as Lived Work Experiences*' highlights the view that the construction of academic identities is a function of the meanings attached to the lived experiences of participation in disciplinary communities (Wenger, 1998). The interactional approach to IT also states that identities are constructed in social interaction and have an idiosyncratic dimension which involves the distinctive interpretations that individuals bring to their roles (Burke & States, 2009:39; Stets, 2006:89).

However, academics are not passive; instead, they use reflexivity to ensure that they are 'active' agents, participating in the world by taking account of themselves and others (Rousseau, 2002:250). Thus their academic identities do not simply depend on the relations between themselves and others but they also depend on their agency as individuals (Gowans, 2002:553). Accordingly, academic identities depict self-meanings that 'feel congruent with the work situation' and which are dynamically constructed in the moment facilitated by 'flexibility of the self'.

It emerged from the data that some academics experienced 'enjoyment' from their work; thus they constructed an identity of a 'passionate teacher' crafted from the meanings of liking and dedication to teaching, continual assessment of own teaching skills, being innovative and exemplary and perceiving their occupation as a calling to transform lives. The study found that teaching is so deeply ingrained into participants' sense of self that it creates a sense of obligation towards one's work and students. Passion for teaching was also found to have a motivating and therapeutic effect on participants as it tended to arouse a deep passion for the advancement of own academic discipline. In this way, participants experience a 'fit' between their self-concepts, their values and their work as academics which in turn, makes their work meaningful (Sathe, 2008:29; Cameron et al. 2003:302).

It is also realised from the findings that some participants experienced 'applicability' in their work as academics; hence they view their work as fitting well with their professional training. Thus they construct an academic identity of 'competent teacher' derived from the meanings of being knowledgeable, fitting across different situations and being who they are meant to be. This observation confirms the view that identities represent an individual's biography of everyday life at a specific time, shaped by a person's actual life experiences and history (Cote & Levine, 2015:27). Therefore the meanings for the construction of academic identity of a competent teacher are pragmatic; they derive from the decision to better oneself and to do work that is congruent with own professional training. They are also

influenced by past work experiences and perceptions that one's job is applicable across discipline-based communities. This confirms the view that identities are characters that people construct for themselves when occupying specific social positions stemming from preferred self-perceptions (Owens et al. 2010:481). The findings also showed that lived experiences of 'exploitation' influence the construction of a 'demoralised teacher' academic identity, crafted from the meanings of being underpaid and doing cheapened work. These perceptions derive from interacting with other professionals and academics within and outside Lesotho and leads NUL academics to compare their working conditions and remuneration levels. From these interactions and resultant comparisons, participants develop a view that they are not only doing de-valued work, but they are also being exploited. As such, they begin to view their work at NUL as comparable to modern slavery. From their job perceptions, their sense of self-esteem and worth are greatly lowered, thus their academic identities are adopted as they act on shared meanings in the process of interaction (Katovich et al. 2003:379).

It is also evident from the study findings that some academics experience 'facilitation' in their work. That is, they have internalised their work tasks to such an extent that meanings associated with facilitating teaching and learning are accepted as self-descriptive (Delamater et al. 2015:132). From this, they construct an academic identity of a 'supportive teacher' crafted from meanings of helping students, emulating other academics, and being an educator and/or trainer. This confirms Cragun and Cragun's (2006:71-72) statement that an individual's identification with the group is not only situational, but it also depends on character traits, personal relationships with members of the group and participants' perceptions of own capabilities and competencies. Thus academic identities of being a supportive teacher derive from intra-group cohesion, cooperation and positive evaluations, as well as loyalty to and pride in the group and its activities (Carter & Fuller, 2015:3).

Some participants experienced 'multitasking' in their work; thus their academic identities derived from the reciprocal influence of networks in interactions across situations and contexts (Carter & Fuller, 2015:4). They constructed the academic identity of a 'multitalented teacher,' from the meanings of aspiration, performing multiple work roles concurrently and being inventive. As such, their role identities as academics have a conventional dimension associated with the cultural expectations tied to their positions in the NUL social structure. They also involve the distinctive analyses academics bring to their roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39); thus academic identities arise from self-evaluations of one's abilities to complete tasks and attain certain levels of achievement or performance (Koumoundourou et al., 2013:270). From the participants who experienced 'prestige' in their work, the study found that they constructed an identity of 'influential teacher' from the perception that they were working in a specialised, prestigious and influential occupation. Therefore the daily, micro-social interactions between themselves and others are key in the construction of academic identities (Van den Berg, 2008:1).

As such, the academic identities of participants who experience occupational prestige in their work, represent the not only the complexities of social life (Van den Berg, 2008:3), but they develop in response to reinforcement and encouragement from others in CoP (Andersen & Taylor, 2008:94). Lastly, the study found that some participants' work is influenced by lived experiences of occupational burnout. From this, they construct the academic identity of a 'stressed teacher' derived from the meanings of doing overwhelming and exhausting work. Hence their academic identities derive from doing too much work, being exhausted and teaching many students. Therefore, the academic identity of a 'stressed teacher' describes the perception that academic work is physically and emotionally draining. It also represents daily biographies of being hectic, feeling powerless and being overworked (Cote & Levine, 2015:27).

Overall, the theme '*Academic Identity as Lived Work Experiences*' seems to conclude that experiences and meanings that are attached to being a 'passionate', 'competent', 'supportive', 'multitalented', 'influential' and 'stressed' teacher all related to lived experiences of work enjoyment, applicability, exploitation, facilitation, multitasking, prestige and burn-out. Therefore the construction of academic identities through 'lived work experiences' shows that academic identities do not only name/describe who one is as an academic, but they also give their behaviour meaning and purpose (Oyserman et al., 2012:70). Secondly, it shows that the construction of an academic identity is a private achievement which requires academics (as individuals) to incorporate the diversity of their working environment into the definition of the person (Wenger, 1998). Therefore, the study concludes that academic identities at NUL derive from subjective interpretations of work roles (Burke & Stets, 2009:39; Stets, 2006:89), academics' life histories and individual commitments (Vandeyar, 2010). As such, 'who' an academic is lies in the way in which an academic lives his or her daily life (Wenger, 1998:149).

9.2.2 Academic Identity as Normative Community Membership

The data analysis revealed that the negotiation of academic identities reflects how academics like to see themselves, given their ideals, what they desire, or what is central or important to them. Thus the key theme '*Academic Identity as Normative Community Membership*' shows that the negotiation of academic identities reflects the priorities that guide academics' actions (Stets, 2006:91). The narratives of participants show that the negotiation of academic identities is due to an academic's effort to live up to the communal expectation of finishing work on time; as such, academics engaged in learned and shared identity work strategies such as 'managing time', 'working overtime', 'self-motivation', 'underperforming', 'balancing work roles' and seeking 'work assistance'. Hence the study showed that the negotiation of academic identities is shared, idiosyncratic, variable, improvised and negotiated through interaction (Owens et al., 2010; Stets & Burke, 2009; Stets, 2007; Stets, 2006). It also revealed that when negotiating their identities, academics continually struggle between their need for self-

fulfillment and the demands of the social structure (Frenk, 2011:2). The findings revealed that some participants were able to finish assigned tasks on time because they 'manage' their time efficiently at work through time 'planning' or through 'being organised'. Other participants indicated that they managed their time by 'starting early', and 'using their time well' at work. These findings lead to the conclusion that is similar to Frenk's (2011:2) assertion that identity negotiation is the result of the continuous struggle between the individual's need for self-fulfillment, the demands of the social structure and the collective consciousness. Hence identity negotiation for participants who manage their time at work is not only contextual (Frenk, 2011:2) but it is also an unavoidable and unchanging feature of day-to-day life among academics (Polzer & Caruso, 2008:91). Managing time therefore is an attempt to strike a balance between achieving the interaction between own/ other goals and satisfying the identity-related goals (Swann & Bosson, 2008:449).

The findings also revealed that some participants were able to finish work because they worked overtime. Although this strategy was found to be detrimental to work-life balance, participants chose to engage in it because it helped them to meet their role expectations at work. In this case, participants engaged in work behaviours such as 'marking (scripts) after hours/at night and on weekends' due to the obligation that they have towards others in their communities. Although most participants worked overtime as their strategy to meet the expectations of their roles, there were others who engaged in marking scripts after hours/at night and on weekends freely in order to ensure that their work outputs were of a high quality.

These findings then lead to the conclusion that academics negotiate their academic identities strategically by choosing to forgo all other activities that are important to them such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development as well as leisure and recreation (Noor, 2011:241). Even so, this sacrifice was found to have negative consequences, with some participants reporting that they were exhausted from the demands of their work. The findings also revealed that some participants chose to motivate themselves to meet the demands of their work and finish it. For some, the need to self-motivate originated from the realisation that self-motivation leads to work enjoyment and positive self-views; it also helped them to go through huge amounts of work despite structural limitations. Therefore, they strived to adhere to their sense of academic self daily while at work by 'persuading themselves', 'pushing to finish' 'staying focused and committed', and not 'resting until the work was done well'.

Consequently, the study concludes that participants reflexively interpreted the communal expectation of finishing work on time through self-motivation, a work behaviour aimed at ensuring that they work according to who they believe they are as academics. Self-motivation also shows that academics are focused in their work; their behaviour is purposive and represents actions associated with attaining a

defined goal. For some participants, underperforming was deemed as an appropriate work behaviour in order to deal with the altered self-views of doing work which was not rewarding accordingly. Hence underperforming matches the negative feelings participants have towards their jobs, thus confirming McCall and Simmons' (in Stets & Burke, 2003:11) view that individuals negotiate the prominence of an identity based on the degree to which they receive extrinsic and intrinsic rewards from it. As such, underperforming is a work behaviour derived from the view that academic work at NUL is 'emotionally draining', 'uninspiring', 'routine', 'and unmatched to lifestyle/needs'. Accordingly, participants were unhappy, with many feeling the need for more money/incentives in order for them to increase their work behaviour and to stop dragging their feet. Thus it can be concluded that underperforming at work is a strategy to achieve a compromise between current and idealised self-images as academics so that smooth role performances can be achieved (Stets & Burke, 2003:12).

Besides underperforming, some participants were unable to finish assigned work on time because they had multiple roles at work. Hence their work behaviour was aimed at 'balancing work roles' as a form of a trade-off to off-set competing and unfavourable work demands and conditions at NUL. These participants resorted to performing well in other aspects of their jobs like teaching, at the expense of others such as research and community work. Besides this, some participants decided to balance their work roles from the realisation that they had 'many things they were doing at work', hence 'marking'(scripts) and 'finding time' was viewed as a problem. Nonetheless, it seems that participants also performed other roles at work which added stress to their already full schedules. Thus they chose to excel in some parts of their work but not in others. The study found that the role that participants tended to trade-off was research in favour of teaching as they were more attached to their teaching roles. This confirms Callero's (1985:204) claim that role identities also stand for objective, not only subjective, experiences. That is, they represent dimensions of the self that are socially shared, socially recognised and defined by action.

The findings also revealed that participants needed 'work assistance' as they believed that it would enable them to meet the cultural expectations tied to being an academic at NUL and to finish work on time. The need to have work assistance is born from teaching large groups of students which makes academics feel like they are doing work 'alone' and 'need help'. Others even stated outright that NUL needed to employ more teaching staff so that the workloads may be shared equitably. They suggested different forms of work assistance such as engagement of marking/teaching assistants or tutors, depending on which area of their work they were struggling with. From their narratives, it also emerged that academics wish that NUL could emulate other HEIs and test the work assistance methods that would free academic staff to focus more on other roles such as research instead of teaching.

Concerning the key theme of *Academic Identity as Normative Community Membership*, it can be concluded that study participants generally experienced role overload or a situation in which various roles, assignments or work required them to exceed the amount of time, resources and energy available for the accomplishment of tasks which in turn led them to perform less effectively (Iroegbu, 2014:84). The experience of role overload therefore causes academics to idiosyncratically and reflexively interpret the cultural expectation of finishing work timeously; hence the negotiation of academic identities at NUL resonates Polzer and Caruso's (1994:618) view that identity negotiation represents the many and varied activities that the individuals engage in as they interact with others and forge agreements regarding their identities.

Therefore, the study concludes that negotiating academic identities involves striking a balance between agency and the demands of membership in discipline based communities at NUL. This confirms Henkel's (2000) view that academics are embedded individuals; thus they are members of the communities and institutions that are defined by their traditions, values and practices. Therefore, the way in which NUL academics fulfil their role expectations is strongly determined by the norms of the communities and institutions that they are part of with NUL. Thus their behaviour within the community is social; it not only reflects the contexts in which they live their work lives, but it confirms Vandeyar's (2010:916) view that academic identities are influenced by different discipline-based communities within HEIs.

9.2.3 Academic Identity as Job Attitudes

Professional identity as the constellation of attributes, beliefs and values is used by individuals to define themselves in specialised, skill- and education-based occupations or vocations (Slay & Smith, 2011:87). Thus professional identities shape not only behaviour, but they are critical in the formation of job attitudes. They also play an integral role in academic staffs' wellbeing and productivity (Caza & Creary, 2016:6; Clarke et al., 2013:9; Lieff et al., 2012:208). The thematic analysis of the data revealed patterns associated with the research question; that is, autonomy, accomplishments, learning, interdependencies, work environment, students' attitudes and recognition influence meaningfulness and fulfillment for academics' professional self-concepts. Therefore the key theme '*Academic Identity as Job Attitudes*' underlines the view that professional identities shape behaviour and are critical in the formation of job attitudes within the workplace (Caza & Creary, 2016:6). The study showed that professional identities are key in the way in which academics assign meanings to themselves as they help them to claim purpose and meaning from their work (Caza & Creary, 2016:6). It was evident from the findings that academics claim purpose and meaning from their work and from the belief that it allows them to have more 'autonomy' to determine their own effort and work schedule (Nguyen et al., 2003:3). Thus, it can be concluded that the professional self-concepts of academics are influenced by self-

meanings of being autonomous in own work; as such, participants enjoyed their job because it allowed them to use their agency to facilitate teaching and learning, despite structural constraints in their jobs. The study also found that academics have the flexibility to design their own work, thus confirming Burke's (2004:5) contention that an identity is based on sets of meanings that people hold for themselves and that define 'what it means' to be who they are as professionals. Professional identities are situated and play an integral role in the wellbeing and productivity of academics (Lieff et al. 2012:208). The findings confirm this view and show that participants' professional identity is influenced by 'accomplishments' or the need to be successful in their work. From their narratives, it was clear that the participants' sense of professional identity derived from accomplishments related to meeting the demands of work despite strenuous circumstances, discovery of new things and from being acknowledged by former students for contributing to their career success. For others, professional self-concepts were influenced by the perception that their work affords them social status, prestige and personal success.

Professional identity also arises from membership in communities with own histories, traditions, myths, values and practices (Johnson et al., 2006:498; Clarke et al. 2013:8). Similarly, the study showed that participants enjoyed and valued their work since it afforded them continuous 'learning'. That is, it allows participants to be 'exposed to new and relevant knowledge' which ultimately influences teaching and learning. Continuous learning was also found to keep participants competitive and relevant as professionals in the workplace. It allowed participants to test their knowledge, to advance their careers, to become more effective in their roles and to get the satisfaction and sense of gratification from their work (Glatthorn, 2002:3-4). Therefore the study confirms James' (2006:7) view that individuals' identities are indivisibly linked with who they are as individuals, their disciplinary commitments and values.

Similarly the study showed that 'independencies' influenced participants' professional self-concepts. They allowed participants to collaborate with others and to perform their duties within work groups formed out of shared interests even in situations that were deprived of resources or were not conducive to academic work. Therefore, workplace alliances and relationships not only embody positive interpersonal relationships at work, but they also facilitate the workers' need to belong within organisations. However, it emerged from the findings that some participants had never experienced cordial relations with colleagues since working at NUL. The narratives showed that they were frustrated with the treatment that they are given by colleagues. Others were dissatisfied with the 'work environment' at NUL as they did not find it interactive, innovative, clean or conducive to learning. Similar to Burke's contention that identity inputs (perceptions of the self in the situation) tell the individual about their environment or what is happening around an individual (Burke & Stets, 2009:64) it was found that there was a misalignment between participants' values and expectations and their work environment

as professionals. Therefore, participants developed a negative job attitude towards their work and its environment, based on how they perceived it and themselves working in such an environment as professionals. This observation highlights the cognitive approach whose view is that identities are reflexive and symbolic in nature (Burke & Reitzes, 1981:84); therefore, similar to Umur (2011), it was found that working conditions influence the NUL academics' job satisfaction. The study also found that 'students' behaviour' towards their studies was a major source of negative job attitudes among the academics as professionals. They complained that students did not have 'an invested interest in their work', 'do not reflect that you teach', 'do not want to do their work' and 'just take their studies lightly'. The findings also revealed that students' attitudes towards their studies was influenced by culture of relying on lecturers for their studies and this was a source of frustration for some participants. Besides this, the study found other factors which contributed to job dissatisfaction among the participants. These included students' negative attitudes towards their studies, their low level of attendance and participation in class, plagiarism, strikes and protests.

Lastly and with regard to the subtheme 'recognition,' the study showed that participants' professional identity was influenced by 'recognition' that they received from their work, regardless of whether it was financial or non-financial. For some academics, meanings for their professional identities were derived from 'liking teaching', 'feeling appreciated', and 'being financially secure'. The study therefore found that participants who emphasised financial recognition, wanted their remuneration to reflect their professional expectations while those who emphasised non-financial recognition enjoyed being appreciated by others from within and outside NUL. Thus it seems NUL academics' simultaneous satisfaction and dissatisfaction with recognition awarded to them reflects both their personal interests and professional identities in their work.

In summary, with regard to the key theme of *Academic Identity as Job Attitudes* the study concludes that meaningfulness and fulfillment for academics' professional self-concepts derives from the job attitudes that academics have towards their jobs. Therefore academic professional identities are on-going processes of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences. The key theme also showed that the professional identity of NUL academics is both individual and social; it derives strongly from participant's expertise, moral and conceptual frameworks and from performing work roles which are strongly determined by discipline-based communities and the institution itself (Clarke et al. 2013:9). Secondly, it showed that the professional identity of NUL academics is the perception of themselves as professionals; thus, it is closely related to the knowledge and skills they have, the work they do and the work-related significant others or the reference group (Robson, 1998:586). Therefore it is concluded that the academic professional identities of NUL academics are key in the way they assign meanings to themselves and claim purpose from their work (Caza & Creary, 2016:6).

9.2.4 Academic identity as Journeys of Self-Discovery

Academic identity is not a fixed property; rather it is part of the lived complexity of a person's projects and their ways of being in those sites which are constituted as being part of the academic life (Clegg 2008:329). Therefore it is not an object; instead it is a constant becoming. Accordingly, as academics go through the succession of the forms of participation, their academic identities form trajectories within and across CoP (Wenger, 1998:154). Archer (2008:385) adds that academics have to deal with the constantly shifting, evolving and changing HE field; therefore the meanings associated with what 'being' an academic entails are also in a process of change. The study found that altruism, passion, options, disillusion and relations influenced participants' academic identity trajectories. Thus the key theme '*Academic Identity as Journeys of Self-discovery*' resonates the view that academic identities are forged within moral frameworks; thus academic identity trajectories are tied up to what academics are committed to, what they value and what they strive for; and these are continually changing (Fitzmaurice, 2013:614). The subtheme 'altruism' showed that academics (as professionals) viewed their work as having connections and additional objectives of giving back to society (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008:262).

The social networks within NUL were found to influence symbolic identification with NUL to the extent that participants viewed it as morally correct for them to experience some self-sacrifice for the benefit of others. Thus they chose to remain committed to their work at NUL since they found it intellectually stimulating and wanted to pass their academic ideals to students. Others chose to remain committed to NUL due to their sense of patriotism, the need to give back to society and to see NUL growing and prospering as a university. As such, the study concludes that the subtheme 'altruism' underpins 'the personal' element in academic identity trajectories (McAlpine, 2012:39); it shows that academics view their work as having connections and additional objectives of giving back to society (Hodson & Sullivan, 2008:262).

Similarly, the subtheme 'passion' for academe revealed that participants chose to remain committed to their work at NUL because they had emotional ties to it. Others chose to remain because NUL is the epitome of academic practice in Lesotho; hence it made sense to stay, grow and attain academic stature and rank. For others the need to stay was influenced by identification with the work environment and its setting, the flexible and autonomous nature of academic work at NUL, while others stayed because they were close to retirement. These findings show that some academics have continuance commitment towards their job and recognise that they have accumulated investments that would be lost if they resigned from the organisation or when they recognise that comparable employment is limited (Paxson, 2003:526; Shore & Wayne, 1993:774). Thus the study concludes that the subtheme 'passion' for academe underpins individual agency in academic identity trajectories (McAlpine, 2012:39). Additionally, the subtheme 'options' was found to underpin the available opportunities in academic

identity trajectories or what individuals understand or knows to be available career opportunities at any point in time (McAlpine, 2012:39). Hence participants considered resigning from NUL in the future because they wished to explore other career opportunities. They were also influenced by the need to acquire better job opportunities with better salaries, thereby improving their social and professional status. This confirmed Stryker's (1980) view that the overall self encompasses different identities, each of which is tied to aspects of the social structure (Stets, 2006:89). As such, by choosing other jobs perceived as 'better' comparatively, participants automatically chose to take advantage of available career options and to meet the expectations of one role rather than the other (Stryker, 2008:20).

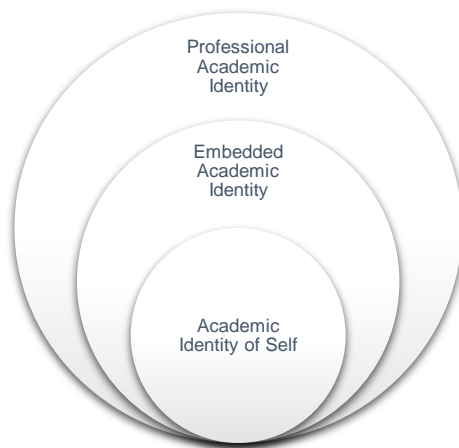
It also emerged from the findings that some participants considered resigning from their work at NUL due to the 'disillusions' they experienced since doing academic work. The study found that past experiences at work and their setting had the power to dishearten and disillusion the academics who once idealised working in academia and viewed it as prestigious, well paying, collaborative and autonomous and generally satisfying with lowered job demands. Therefore, the subtheme 'disillusions' underscores McAlpine's (2012:39) view that past experiences underpin academic identity trajectories and influence present intentions and imagined futures. This observation confirms Fivush and Haden's (2003: vii) findings that identities are nourished by memories of significant past experiences. Lastly, the subtheme 'relations' was found to represent horizons for possible action that underpin academic identity trajectories (McAlpine, 2012:39). That is, participants who encounter situations of conflict and uncertainty at work, considered resigning from NUL. However steadfastly remain loyal and committed to their jobs as academics even though they complained that the previous leadership style of NUL management tried to force some fundamental changes in the way the university was run.

As a result, they not only viewed their workplace as stressful, but they considered themselves powerless to control their work situation. They were also dissatisfied with the authoritative nature of communication between management and staff, where they reported that they were not consulted but were just informed of managements' decisions. This practice left them feeling like they were not part of decision-making efforts during the times of crises at NUL which confirms Trede et al's. (2012:374-375) observation that academics develop their identities from personal epistemologies and shared understandings of relationships, place, mind and practice as well as professional knowledge and expertise.

Overall, the key theme *Academic Identity as Journeys of Self-discovery* shows that whether or not academics remain committed to their identities relies on 'reflexive thinking' in relation to the roles that they play. This enables them to organise orientations and future responses which are then (re)shaped and validated during an interaction (Stryker, 1980:62). The key theme also showed that academic identities have "coherence through time that connects the past, present and the future" (Wenger,

1998:154). Therefore it can be concluded from the findings that identification and loyalty to NUL influences academic identity trajectories; their narratives depict altruism, passion, options, disillusion and relations as indicators of the 'overall strength of their emotional attachment, identification and involvement' with NUL (Cole & Bruch, 2006:588; Paxson, 2003:526). Generally the key themes and subthemes of the study underscore the view that academic identities are the extent to which academics define themselves primarily in terms of the university, the discipline and personal interpretations of what an academic should be like (King & Billot, 2016; Winter, 2009; Henkel, 2000). Therefore the overall conclusion here is that academic identities are '*contextualised*' to NUL; that is, the key themes of academic identities as 'lived work experiences', 'normative community membership', 'job attitudes' and 'journeys of self-discovery' derive from the state of affairs (the situation and the social structure) within NUL as an institution. As such, academic identities rely on the extent to which academics as individuals, group members and role-holders who adopt shared sets of institutional beliefs, internalise them and consistently behave in accordance with them (Bevort & Suddaby, 2016:18-19). Therefore, the construction of academic identities at NUL has less to do with the significance of NUL (as the oldest and largest HEI) in Lesotho and more to do with the ability of academics to tell stories which make sense of their individual work lives within NUL (Slay & Smith, 2011:91), as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Academic Identity as Contextualised Constructs



'Academic Identity of Self' is the inner most layer of *Academic Identity as Contextualised Constructs*. It reflects the distinctive nature of academic identities and precludes the formation of embedded academic identities and professional academic identities. Academic identity of self also reflects the life and personal history of the academic; thus it not only represents an individual's biography of everyday life work experiences at a specific time, but it also relates to relational and behavioural styles shaped by a person's actual life experiences and cultural history (Cote & Levine, 2015:27). This type of academic identity highlights Vandeyar's (2010:916) statement that academic identities reflect the life history of an academic and encompasses individual values and commitments; as such, they are interwoven into the essence of being for an academic.

Embedded academic identity, as the middle layer of *Academic Identity as Contextualised Constructs* (Figure 2), reflects the social nature of academic identities at NUL. It derives from the knowledge of institutional language, structures, histories, myths, values, practices and achieved goods. Embedded academic identity reflects group norms within discipline-based communities; hence, it emphasises group membership and the emotional significance attached to that membership by academics. This type of academic identity brings to light James (2006:1) and Henkel's (2005:157) view that defining communities are critical in the construction of academic identities in universities.

Lastly, professional academic identity reflects the role-based nature of academic identities at NUL. It derives from the myriad of roles such as teaching, research, community service and administration that academics engage in at NUL. It is illustrated as the outermost layer of *Academic Identity as Contextualised Constructs* (Figure 2). Professional identity reflects the constellation of attributes, beliefs and values that academics use to define themselves as members of academic occupations (Slay & Smith, 2011:87). This type of academic identity confirms Clarke et al.'s (2013:7) statement that academic professional identity is derived from teaching and research activities that are subject- or discipline- based.

The discovery of self, embedded and professional academic identities at NUL affirm the view that academic identities are likely to develop in a trichotomy inclusive of personal attributes, group membership and various work roles (Sedikides & Brewer, 2001; Kram et al., 2012). Thus academic identities depict self-meanings that 'feel congruent with the work situation' and which are dynamically constructed and moment facilitated by 'flexibility of the self' (Oyserman et al. 2012:70). As such, academics (as individuals) are not merely passive recipients of identities provided to them by social entities; rather, they are capable of recognising the identity implications and demands of organisations, groups and other social entities. Therefore, they can respond to identity pressures as well as proactively initiate identity dynamics (Kreiner et al., 2006:1333).

In summary, academic identities as 'contextualised constructs' are situational and relational interpretations of interaction between the self and others at work and how these influence who one is as an academic. Therefore, academic identities are constructed within academics' everyday realities (Clarke et al. 2013); hence they are reflective of the life history and individual commitments of an academic (Vandeyar, 2010). Accordingly, NUL academics do not '*have*' identities; their identities are '*constructed*' in daily, ordinary situations and discursive activities (Bamberg et al. 2011:178).

9.3 Model of Academic Identity Construction

The analysis of the construction of academic identities at NUL reveals that overall academic identities at NUL are *contextualised constructs* of personal (self-based), embedded (group-based) and professional (role-based) academic identities (see Figure 2). As a result, academic identities as contextualised constructs derive from ‘work experiences’, ‘membership in communities’, ‘job attitudes’ and ‘career intentions’ based on the self as a unique individual, a group member and a role holder. Therefore academic identities at NUL represent structurally, culturally and institutionally located stories of narratives of experiences and meanings derived from the work situation and social relationships that academics participate in daily at NUL. In this section I extend research conducted to explore how academics construct and negotiate their identities within the HE milieu (c.f. Vandeyar, 2010) and I discuss an emergent model of academic identity construction for academic staff at NUL (c.f. Slay and Smith, 2011) as shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Academic identity construction process



The 'Narratives of Experience' reiterate how meanings attached to distinctive and interpersonal experiences of work and its setting influence the collections of possible and/or available academic identities at NUL. The overall theme is presented as '*Possible Academic Selves at NUL*', with its four key themes 'early influences', 'idealised academic selves', 'tailored images and self-concepts' and 'redefining occupational choices' becoming influential factors. The theme, '*Possible Academic Selves at NUL*', is presented at the core of the academic identity construction process. It encapsulates the three types of academic identities at NUL; person, social and role (see Figure 1: Academic Identity as Contextualised Constructs).

In the narratives, participants used cultural definitions of academic roles such as '*I am a teacher/instructor/lecturer*' or '*I am a researcher/consultant*' and '*I am a tutor/head of department/community worker/practitioner*' to define their various academic selves. Therefore '*Possible Academic Selves at NUL*' does not only depict the professional, embedded and self-academic identities at NUL (collections of work identities at NUL), but it emphasise Gale's (2011) statement that experiences and incidents related to teaching, peers, research and the institution have varied weighting in terms of their influence in the construction of academic identities. It also highlights Slay and Smith's (2011:87) statement that academic identities are constructed during the process of adjustment and adaptation of academic careers. Therefore, similar to other social groups, academics at NUL have a range of identities that are part of the objective knowledge of its members (Berger, 1966:107).

The first factor, '*Early Influencers*,' in the model shows that various socialisation processes (before and after joining NUL), interaction with others (within and outside NUL) as well as initial and current experiences of doing academic work at NUL help to create repertoires of possible and/or available academic identities. Interestingly, in this study all possible selves were derived from teaching experiences (both good and bad); thus being a teacher is important for 'who' one is as an academic (cf. Darabi, et al., 2017; Van Winkel et al., 2017; Feather, 2012; Gale, 2011)¹⁶. For that reason, self-perceptions of how good or bad one is at teaching, invariably leads to the development or weakening of one's notion as an academic. For example Hillary's narrative showed that early professional training in teaching influenced her deep enjoyment of '*teaching and everything that goes with it*'. Thus being a professional teacher helped her to craft and develop 'person' and 'role-based' identities as an academic. Conversely, Carl who had recently started teaching at the university level indicated that the negative experiences in his work influenced him to disidentify with his 'role-based' academic identity. As a result he experienced his work as '*just too much*' for him (cf. Carra et al., 2017:1).

¹⁶ Five participants in the sample were from the Faculty of Education. Even so, all participants considered themselves teachers/lecturers/instructors first, therefore being a 'teacher' is considered to be a significant experience of doing academic work at NUL.

The second factor '*Idealised Academic Selves*' shows how membership and participation within discipline-based communities also supplies academics with shared customs, beliefs, habits, folkways, perceptions and sanctioned behaviour trade-offs which they incorporated into identity work strategies to negotiate their self-perceptions as academics. In addition to the narratives provided in the analysis section, many academics shared the consequences and effects of trying to be like others within the group while balancing own individuality. For example, in the narratives it emerged that academics were generally under pressure to finish assigned tasks; as a result, they engaged in learned and shared behaviours such as '*marking after working hours/on weekends*' and '*cross-nighting*'.

However, this was found to have a negative aspect on their work life balance as indicated by Amos "*The work we do here is just too much...now you find that what I do is all the enjoyment that I have. I cannot go to weddings or funerals on weekends*". Therefore the learned and shared behaviours of working overtime suggests that historical occurrences and interaction within defining communities leads academics to form certain self-images of themselves and conform to the culturally sanctioned modes of behaviour (cf. Van Winkel et al., 2017). However, it was clear that participants used their agency and chose to be proactive and organised in their work in order to meet the cultural expectation of finishing work on time. For example, Michael stated that "*personal organisation, time management and understanding with students*" helped him finish assigned tasks timeously.

The third factor '*Tailored Images and Self-concepts*' suggests that 'feedback' from the work that one does plays a huge role in the development of a professional identity as an academic. To illustrate, Rachel said: '*What I don't enjoy most is a very big group of students who do not seem to have an invested interest in their work*'. Amos added: '*When I see my products, people I have taught that have finished, when I meet them they say, 'sir you are a good teacher, you taught me well'*'. Thus experiences of either being fulfilled or unfulfilled at work influences how academics view themselves as professionals. They also confirm Slay and Smith's (2011:86) view that professional identity is "one's professional self-concept, based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences".

However, the findings indicated that academics learned to adapt their expectations and values to suit their work and to make work meaningful (although some admittedly found this more or less difficult to do). For example, Norris states: '*I am not satisfied...in terms of marking large number of students*' while Leslie says: '*because of my job, I managed to be exposed to a lot of things that I would have otherwise not been exposed to*'. Hence the possible professional selves at NUL rely, to a large extent on alignment of job facets and individual values and expectation. Further, the attitudes academics hold about their work depends on whether it enhances their sense of professional self-esteem or not.

Similarly, the fourth factor '*Redefining Occupational Choices*' indicates that redefining occupational choices depends on identification and internalisation of the possible selves that one has as a professional and an academic. That is, whether or not one remains in academia or is loyal to NUL depends on the extent to which he or she identifies with his or her work and its setting. For example, Robyn believes that her work at NUL is not '*paying well and making one to be proud of working there*' and this is something that '*can make one to go and look for another job if possible*'. Conversely, Marcel states that the opportunities for training and development at NUL '*are some factors that make me to stay*'. This perception starts from his realisation that '*the university willingly assists members of the staff to further their studies or even to attend conferences. This will eventually help one in teaching and learning*'. Thus past experiences, future intentions, personal values and commitments, engaging in diverse activities and future prospects play a big role in whether an academic decides to stay committed to NUL or not.

In summary, narratives academics tell about their work are important for understanding academic identities since they show how different forms of community participation and identification influence their construction (Vandeyar, 2010). This study extends these ideas by presenting how self, embedded and professional identities may change as a result of how academics feel about their work. As such, academics tell stories that make the researcher (and readers of this research study report) privy to things that annoy or satisfy them about academic work as professionals. Therefore it can be concluded that the ever-changing nature of the work situation and relations within the NUL social structure gives the justification of how academics are likely to redefine their self, embedded and professional identities.

To conclude, '*Possible Academic Selves*' entails self-meanings attached to: (1) being an academic (academic identity as lived work experiences); (2) being a member of a disciplinary community (academic identity as normative community membership); (3) being (un)fulfilled by own job (academic identity as job attitudes) and (4) being committed to an academic career (academic identity as journeys of self-discovery).

9.4 Reflections

My interest in studying how academic staff members' work experiences contribute to their work identities arose from the emotionally charged comments that they uttered. These bothered me, and I asked myself: 'Why would people whose jobs are critical in the socio-economic development of Lesotho say this and what does this mean in terms of the quality of the HE sector in Lesotho? The writing of this thesis therefore provided me with a chance to find out where some of these job perceptions were coming from (see Chapter one: Rationale for the study). After the theoretical and empirical review of the literature on academic identities and subsequent findings of this study, I came to the realisation that the

subjective and emotionally charged comments that I heard some academics making, resulted from the reflexive meanings that they attached to themselves, their work and its setting. From the participants' stories it is concluded that academic identities are 'lived' through the stories that academics tell to make sense of who they are (Brown, 2014; Vandeyar, 2010; Kreiner et al., 2006).

The contribution of this study is considered by reflecting on three issues, namely; the academic identities within the Lesotho HE milieu, the theoretical framework and the methodology.

9.4.1 Academic identities within the Lesotho HE milieu

The movement of self and identity to the centre of the intellectual debates was witnessed in the last thirty decades (Brown, 2014:22). Today, identity in particular, is a significant component in contemporary sociological theorising (Cerulo, 1997:385); its rise is facilitated by an ever increasing interest in the practices and strategies used in its formation, especially in the agency that actors exercise in constructing their identities (Brown, 2014:23; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010:135). Nonetheless, research focusing exclusively on academic identities is unique within the Lesotho HE sector, generally, and within NUL, specifically. Studies on identity have also not fully and consistently centered on the importance of work or the place of work in the context of identity formation and practice (Kirk & Wall, 2011:77). They have also given a limited insight on how academics eventually possess the constructs and ideas that inform their academic identities (Clarke et al. 2012:7) or on the nature and complexity of the factors related to the formation and growth of academic identities (Lieff et al. 2012:208).

Therefore, the focus on academic identities within the Lesotho HE milieu was intended to close the empirical and theoretical lacunas in industrial sociology generally, and in sociology of professions, specifically. The findings of this study represent an important contribution to ongoing debates on the construction of academic identities. The amalgamation of the research objectives also shows that this study was essentially interested in finding out how cultural expectations, work behaviour, job facets, loyalty to NUL, membership in COP as well as values, expectations, experiences and meanings attached to being an academic at NUL relate to the construction and negotiation of academic identities.

From the findings it is concluded that academics construct academic identities as a result of their work experiences; they negotiate them through normative community membership and they develop professional identities from various attitudes that they have towards their work and its setting. Lastly, it is concluded that the construction of an academic identity is a process that evolves as part of a career trajectory as academics participate at NUL and in broader professional communities. The study participants stressed the importance of their teaching roles in the construction of academic identities and in many cases the teaching role determined the overall experiences at work, work behaviour within

discipline-based communities, professional identity and identity trajectories. Study participants who identified with their teaching roles generally had good experiences of work, thus they identified with their work and tended to be motivated when doing it. They were also fulfilled in their work and tended to be loyal to NUL. Even so, some participants found other aspects of their work besides teaching such as research, community work, consultancies and mentoring meaningful. However, the opposite was observed with the participants who did not identify with their teaching roles; they tended to complain about workloads, marking, teaching methods and working conditions. They also tended not to see any future in academic careers.

9.4.2 Theoretical reflections

The interactionist perspective was found to be useful in describing the meanings attached to work and its setting in the construction of academic identities. It revealed that academic identities derive from either the work situation itself or from the social relations that academics participate in while at work. Overall, the general ideas regarding the construction of academic identities are recognised from the influence of lived work experiences, normative community membership, job attitudes and career trajectories. The value of the interactionist perspective can also be seen in how it helped to provide answers to the overarching question of the study: 'How do narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities at NUL'?

In this regard, Alexander and Wiley's (1981) SIT conclude that academic identities are constructed from situationally derived meanings attached to the lived experiences of doing own work at NUL. SIT also showed that academic identities derive from (1) definition of the situation, (2) social encounters and (3) situated activity. When constructed from the definition of the situation, SIT showed that work experiences and meanings that academics attribute to their work and its setting as well as the situational perceptions of themselves while at work, influence the construction of academic identities. Therefore, the findings highlight SIT's that the construction of academic identities is not merely 'reactions' to the work setting, situations, or facts in and of themselves. Instead, academics respond to 'real' forces shaping their conduct because if they define those situations as 'real', then they are 'real' in their consequences (Reynolds, 2003:66).

When constructed in social encounters, SIT also showed that academic identities derive from the actor's reference processes; that is, academic identities represent sets of internal assertions made by academics on the basis of their relationships with others (Alexander & Wiley, 2004:288). The findings of the study showed that academics' existing self-concepts and socially derived characteristics influence the construction of academic identities. These findings proved SIT's argument that identities are 'established and maintained as a prerequisite for social conduct' (Alexander & Lauderdale, 1977:225).

Lastly, when constructed in situated activity, SIT revealed that academics continually establish, confirm and modify identities to portray those that are more socially desirable than others. Thus while engaging in situated activities at work, academics perceive particular others and consciously incorporate their perspectives into their conduct at work (Alexander & Wiley, 1981:273). Accordingly academics situated activity represents their ability to incorporate others' perspectives into their conduct. Hence academic identities establish where and what a person is in social terms; they further situate individuals and mould them into social objects by virtue of their participation or membership in social relations (Stone, 1962:93).

Similarly, when analysing the first subsidiary question of the study, 'how do reflexive interpretations of the cultural expectations tied to the membership in disciplinary communities influence the negotiation of academic identities and work behaviour of academic staff?' McCall and Simmons' (1978) interactional approach to IT showed that the negotiation of academic identities derives from idiosyncratic perceptions and interpretations of being a member of disciplinary communities at NUL; that is, participants negotiate their academic identities by reflexively and idiosyncratically striving to adhere to the shared communal expectation of finishing work on time. They also engaged in work behaviours such as managing time, working overtime, being self-motivated, underperforming, balancing work roles and seeking work assistance to ensure that their work behaviour represented their prominent roles as academics. As such, the interactional approach to IT showed that academic identities were preferred 'role characters' which academics created for themselves as occupants of social positions at NUL (Owens et al., 2010:481; Stets & Burke, 2009:11).

With regard to the second subsidiary question; 'how do descriptions of the (mis)alignment between job facets, individual values and expectations influence meaningfulness and fulfilment for academics' professional self-concepts?' Burke's (1980) cognitive approach to IT showed that the professional identity or how a professional perceives himself or herself to be at work is influenced by the perception of the congruence between one's values and expectations regarding job facets such as autonomy, accomplishments, learning, workplace, interdependencies, workloads and recognition. As such, the cognitive approach to IT showed that professional identities had five theoretical properties of identities; that is, they were self-meanings, relational, reflexive, affect behaviour indirectly and motivated the individuals (MacKinnon, 1994:88).

Lastly, Stryker's (1982) the structural approach to IT shows that internalised meanings of altruism, 'passion' for teaching, opportunities and 'options, 'disillusions' about academe and work 'relations' influence academic identity trajectories. It further proves that the NUL social structure, with its intersecting positions and associated roles linked through shared activities and meanings, provide the context for the meanings and expectations associated with the role (Stryker & Burke, 2000:12-13).

Hence, whether one stays at NUL or not depends on taking “role choice” or deciding to meet the expectations of one's ‘future’ role rather than the present one at NUL (Stryker, 2008:20).

9.4.3 Methodological reflections

This research let academics (as individuals) share their stories in the context which they experienced them (since work experiences stories cannot be separated from the work context). Therefore the first methodological strongpoint of this study is that it permitted academics to tell stories about their work and its setting. This approach enabled me to observe the social medium in which those stories take place (Potter, 2015:18). Secondly, the deployment of the interpretive paradigm benefited the study since it allowed for and acknowledged the academics’ subjective understandings of the NUL social world as being valid. It showed that other’s experiences can be understood by interacting with or listening to their experiences as humans are embedded in a complex world (Morehouse, 2012:23).

The third methodological strongpoint of this study is the consistency between the research questions, research design and method. The interpretive qualitative approach, the narrative inquiry design and the narrative interviews were found to be appropriate as the resulting interpretation of the data resulted in the representation of the construction of academic identities as told by the academics. For example, this study proved the suitability of narrative inquiry as a research design by showing that academics understand and give meaning to their lives through stories of experience (Trahar, 2009; Webster & Mertova, 2007; Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007; Clandinin, 2006).

Besides lived work experiences, this study used three factors to study the construction of academic identities at NUL; these factors were (1) community participation, (2) job perceptions and (3) career trajectories. These multiple perspectives on academic identity gave participants a chance to reflect upon and describe their academic identities in different ways while highlighting meaningful and relevant experiences that make up who one is as an academic. These three aspects of academic identity also promoted the reflection on various ways in which academic identities may also be constructed. As such, work experiences were translated into language.

However (as shown in chapter four) this study has three main methodological limitations. Firstly, it is cross-sectional; thus it involves observations of a phenomenon or sample at one point in time (Babbie, 2010:106). Even so, unlike other cross-sectional studies which only study phenomena as it exists currently, this study considers how academic staffs’ feelings about their jobs in the past, in the present and in the future affect self-concepts. This is a strong point. Secondly, the results may not be generalised to the entire population of academics in HEIs in Lesotho because non-probability sampling

techniques were used. Finally my role as an insider-researcher cannot be overruled for its possible influence on the participants' responses.

9.5 New Directions in the Sociology of Professions

Vandeyar (2010:914) argues that it is important to study academics' work lives from their standpoint (where they actively and socially develop their identities) as this provides a perspective from which their identities can be understood. Therefore this study closes the literature gap in sociology by providing a deeper understanding of the work-life concerns and variety of work practices which academics at NUL engage in and how those work activities influence their academic self-concepts. This study also concludes that occupational communities are critical in the formation of academic identities because, according to the findings they house assumptions about what is to be learned, task performance, patterns of publication professional interaction as well as social and political status (Clarke et al. 2013:7; Clarke et al, 2015:23). Accordingly Henkel's (2005:157) contention that academic identities are "reinforced in and by strong stable communities and the social processes generated within them" is confirmed.

This study analysed the academic profession as a distinct form of work activity; specifically, it focused on the relationships which direct the profession as well as the NUL work environment, thereby illustrating the development of academic identities as an interplay between the individual, the institution and the social groups within the NUL disciplinary communities (Henkel, 2011:65). Further, the study described the individual experiences of 'being' an academic within the Lesotho HE milieu, thus showing that it was constructed from lived work experiences, community membership, job attitudes and career trajectories. The interactionist and interpretive methodological underpinnings of the study also described in detail the subjective meanings used in the construction of an academic identity; thus interpreting these meanings showed the perceptions of academics as a group attribute to the 'contexts' of their work lives. This study also showed in detail what it means to be an academic at NUL by showing that academics are complete beings with experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values. It is against this background that this study makes several contributions to the Sociology of Professions as a field of study.

Firstly, this study shows that the construction of academic identities at NUL relates to 'lived experiences of participation in CoP' (Wenger, 1998:151). Therefore, in one way or another, academic identities are contextual to the prevailing situation within the structure and CoP. They also depend on academic fields of specialisation (domains), CoP and the academic practice itself. Secondly, this study reveals that academic identities at NUL have trajectories; they are in a constant state of flux and change. Accordingly, academic identities at NUL are shaped and driven by the community's culture; the

community provides the daily environment, events and context for the negotiation of academic identities at NUL. As such, by interacting with each other regularly, NUL academics adopt academic identities and learn how to do their work better, based on collective concerns, beliefs and values (Wenger & Wenger-Trayner, 2015:1). Wenger's (2012:2) three fields of CoP: *the domain*, *the community* and *the practice* were also found to relate to the overall themes of Academic Identities as Contextualised at NUL; that is, the *Academic Identity of Self* represents the interpretations of work and the setting within the domain, *Embedded Academic Identity* represents the community while and *Professional Academic Identity* represents professional practice.

9.6 Future research

Empirical research on academic identities in the Lesotho HE sector is virtually non-existent although research from South Africa and other countries has established the relevance and usefulness of studying academic identities. Thus academic identities should be explored fully in the context of Lesotho HE sector; focusing on private and public HEIs as there may be additional unique characteristics within academic identities which this study did not unearth. Issues of gender relations and gender analysis, especially in how men and women perceive, experience and narrate their identities, conditions and situations, could also be interesting avenues for future research since gender plays a role in experiences, interactions, behaviours and expectations that shape identities. Conducting similar research studies using different research methodologies would not only expand the meanings and experiences of being an academic in those HEIs but it would also contribute to the overall representation of academic identity within the Lesotho HE sector. For example grounded theory and phenomenological studies would be ideal for future mixed methods studies as the findings might show the underlying processes and interpretation of academic identities.

The findings of the study suggest that academic identities at NUL are reflexive processes derived from past and current work experiences, the profession and the university itself; thus future research could focus on range of responses and coping mechanisms individual academics employ in dealing with threats to academic freedom and changing circumstances in their work and its setting. More sociological research efforts also need to be given to the phenomenon of academic identities over time. I believe that longitudinal studies of this phenomenon with another group of participants might help to rectify the limitation in this study where I studied how the academics feel about their work cross-sectionally; thus there is a possibility of personal bias in their stories. Investigating life-time careers in academe might bring in a renewed perspective to research on academic identities and might show the real 'growing pains' of constructing an academic identity.

9.7 Conclusions

This study asked the question, “how do the narratives of experiences and meanings attached to being an academic relate to the construction of academic identities? Through the ‘narratives of experience’, SIT and IT showed that idiosyncratic interpretations of daily working lives and interaction with significant others within and/or outside NUL’s discipline-based communities contributed to the construction of academic identities. Thus NUL academics integrate past, present and envisioned situational and relational work experiences into an ‘internalised evolving story’ or academic identity (McAdams, 2001).

Overall, the findings were that academic and professional identities were crafted and negotiated from lived and shared work experiences of being an academic at NUL. Accordingly, ‘who’ NUL academics are, lies in the way in which they live their daily work lives (Wenger, 1998). Their identities are representations of experiences and personal interpretations of what an academic should be like based on attitudes, goals, values, knowledge, discipline, histories, work context, membership in disciplinary communities, academic roles and other life domains (King & Billot, 2016; Clarke et al., 2013; Kram et al., 2012; Vandeyar, 2010; Feather, 2010; Billot, 2010; Kreiner et al., 2006; James, 2006; Musolf, 2003; Weigert et al., 1986).

Therefore it is concluded that academic identities at NUL are; (1) ‘hybrids’ of internal (individual) perspectives, actions and stories as well as external (institutional) influences (Pick et al., 2015); (2) attempts to make sense of ‘who’ one is by the way one lives one’s daily work life (King & Billot, 2015; Wenger, 1998); (3) influenced by factors within personal, relational and contextual domains (Lieff et al., 2012) and (4) results of the negotiation of the tension between the structure, communities and the academic’s own position (Kreiner et al., 2006; Bamberg, 2010; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Brown, 2014; McAlpine, Amundsen & Turner, 2014).

Consequently Quigley (2011) and Vandeyar’s (2010) view of academic identities as shifting targets which differ for each individual academic has been established.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

My name is Lipalesa Mathe and I am currently working towards a doctoral degree in Sociology at the University of South Africa. I would like to interview you by asking you a few questions on your work experiences since working at NUL with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of how you perceive your job as an academic, which is why you were selected for this research. Your participation in this research is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any questions or even choose to end this interview anytime without any negative repercussions.

The interview will take approximately one hour. Should you agree to participate, I shall record our conversation on an audio recorder to help me remember all the information from our conversation. However, this will only be done with your consent. I will then transcribe (write out) what you have said. Our discussion will be confidential and your name will not be recorded anywhere in the transcription manuscript so there will be no way of linking what you say in this interview to who you are. Only I (and my supervisor) will see this information. The audio files and transcripts of our conversation will be securely stored, and only I will have access to this information. Once the research is finalised, the audio files and transcripts will be destroyed. The Management of this HEI are aware of, and have given their consent, to this research.

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | I voluntarily agree to participate in the project. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | The separate terms of consent for interviews, audio, video or other forms of data collection have been explained and provided to me. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Statement by the participant

Name of participant.....

Signature of participant..... Date
Day/month/year

Statement by the researcher

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

Signature of researcher Date
Day/month/year

Appendix B: Interview Guide

As you saw in the consent form, my name is Lipalesa Mathe. I am interested in how you experience and perceive your work as an academic. Is there anything you would like to ask me before we begin our interview?

Own identity

Tell me who you are.

- a) Where are you originally from?
- b) Which educational institutions did you attend?
- c) Tell me about your family life.
- d) When did you start working here at NUL?
- e) How do you view yourself as an academic?

History of job experiences

Can you describe your job here at NUL?

- a) Currently, how do you feel about your job here at NUL?
- b) How did you feel about your job in the past?
- c) Why did you feel like that?

Job attitudes

What do you like/dislike most about your job?

- a) Do you feel fulfilled by your job?
- b) Why are these issues important to you as a professional?
- a) Can you tell me about specific events when you liked/disliked your job?

Work behaviour

Are you able to complete your current assigned job tasks on time?

- a) Why do you think you are able/unable to do so?
- b) What can be done to increase your ability to complete tasks on time?
- c) What does your ability/inability to finish assigned tasks on time mean to you?

Intention to quit

Have you ever thought of resigning from NUL?

- a) Why did you have such thoughts?
- b) Which factors would influence your decision to leave this HEI?
- c) Which factors would make you stay with this HEI?

Appendix D: Demographic Characteristics

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of NUL Academics

| NO . | NAME | GENDER | MARITAL STATUS | NUMBER CHILDREN | RESIDENCE | COUNTRY/DISTRICT OF ORIGIN | NATIONALITY | HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION |
|------|-----------|--------|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | René | Female | Single | No children | Maseru | Maseru | Mosotho | Masters |
| 2. | Robyn | Female | Married | 1 child | Maseru | Mafeteng | Mosotho | Masters |
| 3. | Holly | Female | Married | 3 children | Maseru | Leribe | Mosotho | Masters |
| 4. | Teresa | Female | Married | 1 child | Maseru | Thaba-Tseka | Mosotho | Masters |
| 5. | Rachel | Female | Married | 1 child | Maseru | Maseru | Mosotho | Masters |
| 6. | Marianne | Female | Single | No children | Maseru | Qacha's Nek | Mosotho | Masters |
| 7. | Hilda | Female | Married | 2 children | Leribe | Mohale's Hoek | Mosotho | Masters |
| 8. | Elizabeth | Female | Divorced | 3 adopted children | NUL Staff Residences | Zimbabwe | Zimbabwean | Masters |
| 9. | Edith | Female | Married | 3 children | Maseru | Maseru | Mosotho | Masters |
| 10. | Rhea | Female | Married | 3 children | Berea | Maseru | Mosotho | PhD |
| 11. | Hope | Female | Married | 3 children | Maseru | Maseru | Mosotho | PhD |
| 12. | Diana | Female | Divorced | 2 children | Maseru | Butha-Buthe | Mosotho | PhD |
| 13. | Hillary | Female | Married | 3 children | Maseru | Leribe | Mosotho | PhD |
| 14. | Norris | Male | Married | 2 children (twins) | Maseru | Berea | Mosotho | Masters |
| 15. | David | Male | Single (engaged) | Expecting first child | Maseru | Maseru | Mosotho | Masters |
| 16. | Anderson | Male | Married | 1 child (expecting another) | Maseru | Leribe | Mosotho | Masters |
| 17. | Quincy | Male | Married | 2 children | NUL Staff Residences | Cameroon | Cameroonian | Masters |
| 18. | Carl | Male | Married | 1 child | Maseru | Leribe | Mosotho | Masters |
| 19. | Clark | Male | Single (engaged) | No children | Maseru | Butha-Buthe | Mosotho | Masters |
| 20. | Leslie | Male | Married | 3 children | Maseru | Mafeteng | Mosotho | Masters |
| 21. | Nelson | Male | Married | No children | Maseru | Berea | Mosotho | Masters |
| 22. | Maxwell | Male | Married | 1 child | Maseru | NUL Staff Residences | Mosotho | PhD |
| 23. | Michael | Male | Married | 3 children | NUL Staff Residences | Cameroon | Cameroonian | Masters |
| 24. | Marcel | Male | Married | 2 children | Maseru | Leribe | Mosotho | Masters |
| 25. | Alden | Male | Married | 3 children | NUL Staff Residences | Ghana | Ghanaian | Masters |
| 26. | Daniel | Male | Married | 3 children | Maseru | Maseru | Mosotho | PhD |

| | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------|------|---------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|------------|---------|
| 27. | Amos | Male | Married | 3 children | Maseru | Leribe | Mosotho | Masters |
| 28. | Agribo | Male | Married | 1 child | NUL Staff Residences | Zimbabwe | Zimbabwean | PhD |
| 29. | Robert | Male | Married | 2 children (one is deceased) | Maseru | Maseru | Mosotho | PhD |
| 30. | John | Male | Single | No children | NUL Staff Residences | Kenya | Kenyan | PhD |
| 31. | Alex | Male | Married | 4 children | NUL Staff Residences | Ethiopia | Ethiopian | PhD |